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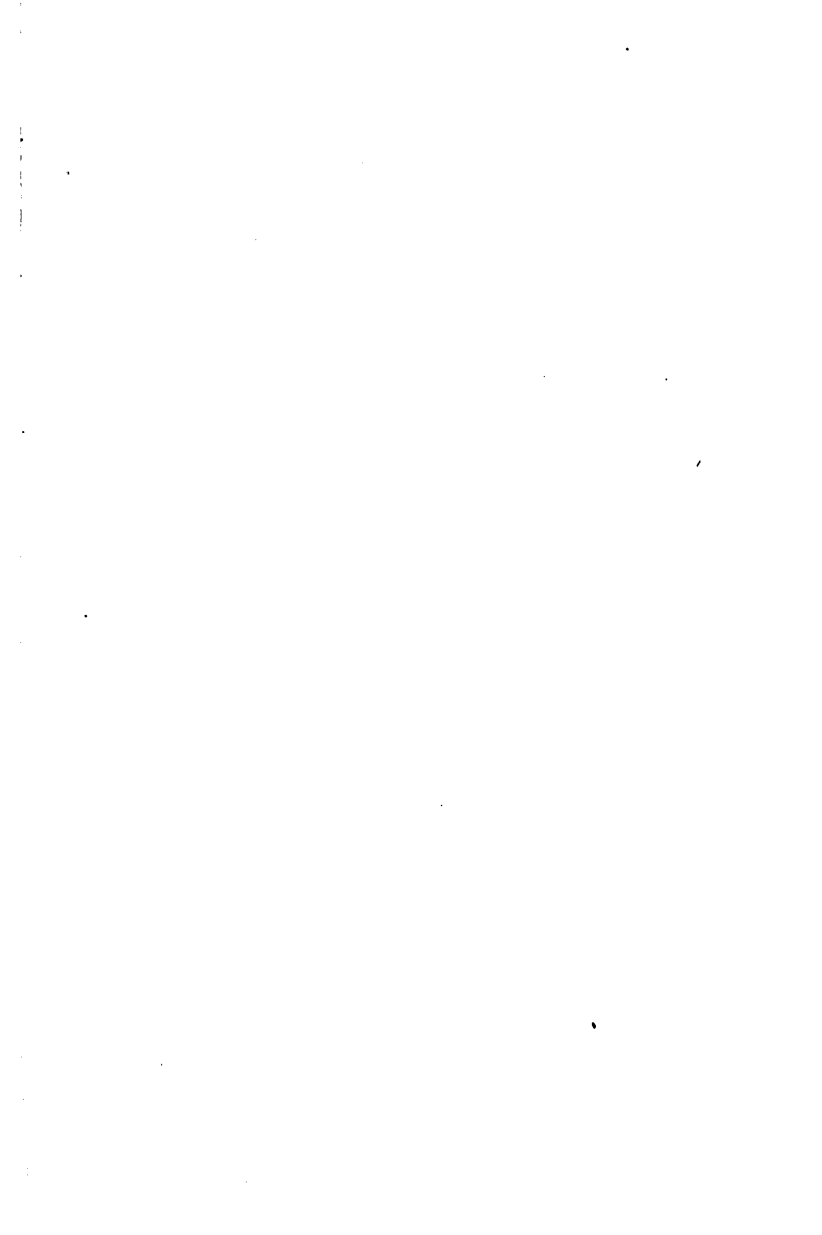
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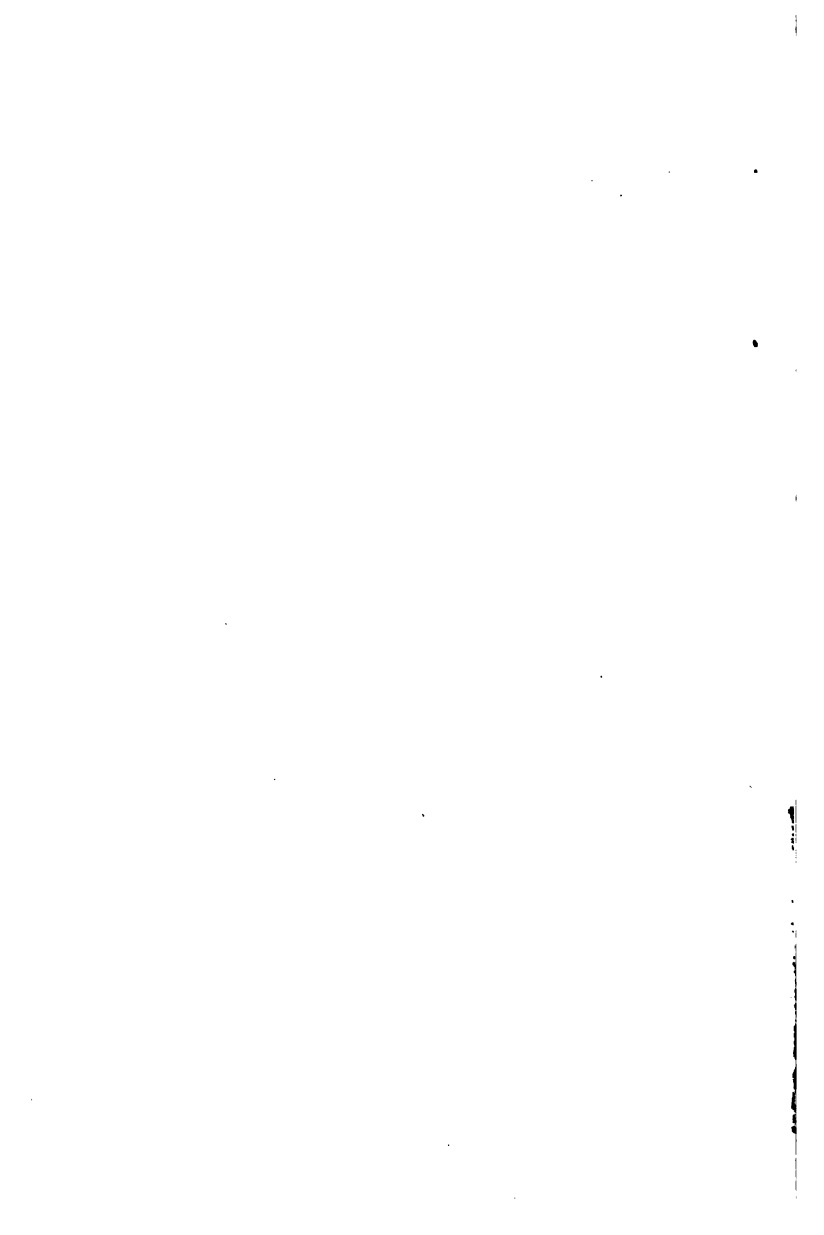


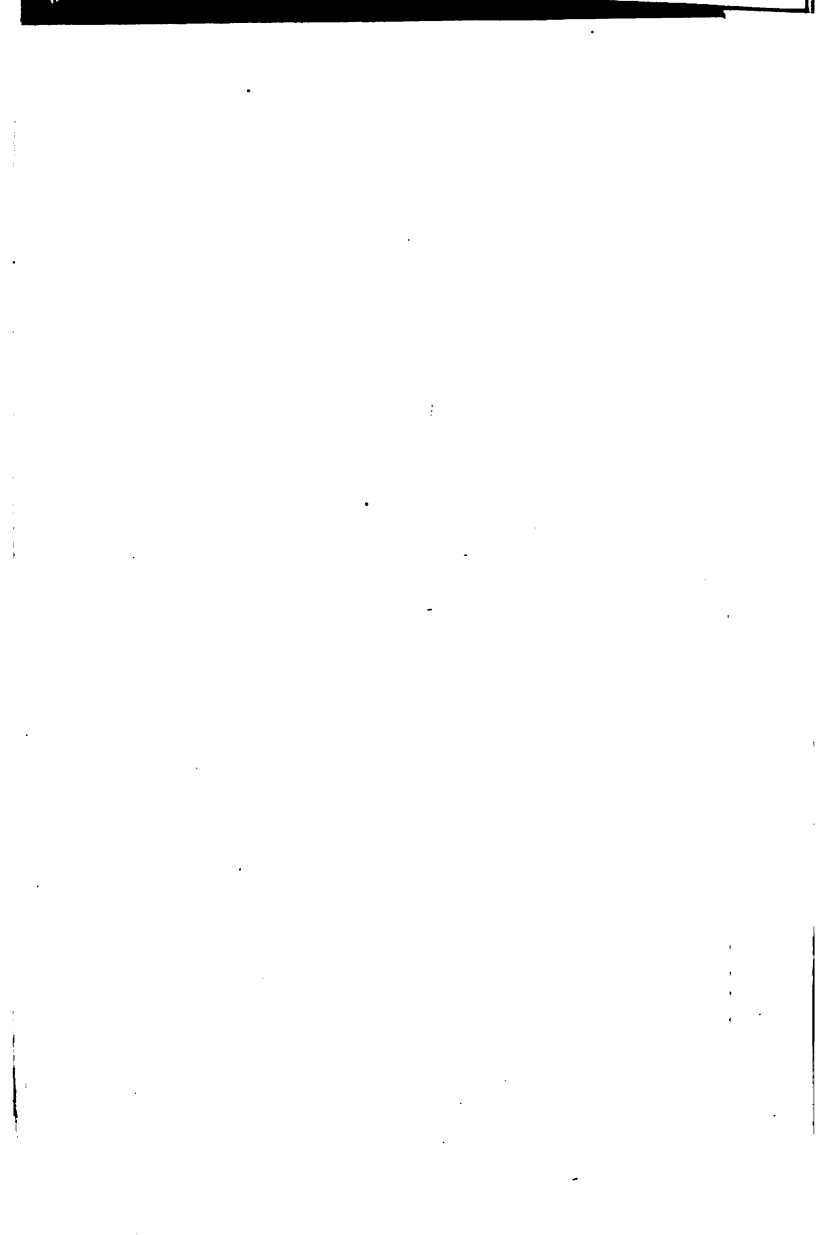


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THE
INTERNATIONAL REVISION COMMENTARY
ON THE
NEW TESTAMENT

BASED UPON THE REVISED VERSION OF 1881

BY
• ENGLISH AND AMERICAN SCHOLARS
AND MEMBERS OF THE REVISION COMMITTEE

EDITED BY
PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D., LL. D.
Professor in the Union Theological Seminary of New York,
President of the American Committee on Revision.

VOL. I.
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.
BY THE EDITOR.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1882
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PREFACE.

The Anglo-American Revision of 1881 calls for new commentaries and new concordances. It is based upon a much older and purer text, and corrects several thousand errors and inaccuracies which mar the excellencies of the Version of 1611. It puts the English reader as nearly as possible into the position of the student of the Greek Testament. The only serious charge which has been brought against it, is its close adherence to the original. This is in fact a recommendation and makes it all the better adapted as a basis for a commentary. The Revision claims no perfection and admits of improvements; but if not the *best* possible, it is certainly much *better* than the *good* Old Version. It is as acceptable a compromise as can be made in the *present* generation for all English speaking denominations, and will no doubt gradually take the place of the Old Version in much less time than it has taken for this to supplant its still older rivals. Revolutions never go backward.

This is the first volume of a series of Commentaries on the New Testament, based upon the REVISED VERSION of 1881, to be issued in small handy volumes. The text is taken from the authorized University edition. The readings and renderings preferred by the American Committee have been, for convenience sake, transferred to the foot of the page.

The title involves no pretension, but simply expresses a fact. It is the joint work of British and American Scholars and Revisers. The majority of the contributors were officially connected with one of the two Revision Committees, and the others were in full sympathy with

the Revision. Moreover, the aim of this Commentary falls in with the International Sunday-School Lesson system, which has done so much in a short time to promote the popular study of the Bible throughout the English-speaking world.

The Revision Commentary is substantially a cheap republication of the 'Illustrated Popular Commentary,' by the same authors, exclusive of the costly illustrations and maps, and emendations of the Old Version. The plan was conceived by the editor about thirty years ago, before he undertook the English reproduction and adaptation of Dr. Lange's threefold Commentary for ministers and theological students, recently completed in 25 volumes. The execution has occupied much of the time of the contributors during the last twelve years.

The Commentary on *Matthew* has been very carefully revised and partly rewritten by the general Editor, and brought up to the latest date. The illustrated volume on the first three Gospels appeared as the joint work of the Editor and his friend, Dr. Riddle. In the new edition, the labor has been so divided between them that Dr. Riddle assumed the revision of *Mark* and *Luke* with liberty to transfer comments on parallel sections from *Matthew* to the other Gospels so as to make them independently complete, as they appear in separate volumes.

May the blessing of the God of the Bible rest upon this and upon all other efforts to make its meaning clearer to the understanding and dearer to the heart of the reader.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, New York, March, 1882.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The New Testament.*

ITS IMPORTANCE.

The small volume which we call the **NEW TESTAMENT**, contains more life and light than all the libraries of the world. It occupies a conspicuous isolation among books and rises above them like a pyramid of Egypt above the sandy plain, or like Mount Sinai above the surrounding desert. It is the pulpit of God from which He proclaims His message of redeeming love to mankind. When Sir Walter Scott was drawing nigh to the gates of death, he asked for the reading of 'the book,' as if there were no other. Goethe remarked toward the close of his life that in point of religion and morals humanity will never rise higher than the standard of the Gospels. Heinrich Ewald said to Dean Stanley, then an Oxford student, pointing to a Greek Testament in his hand: 'In this little book is contained all the wisdom of the world.'

The New Testament is far more than a book: it is an institution, which lies at the foundation of our Christian society and civilization. It rules in church and school, it presides at the family devotions, it inspires, ennobles, directs and cheers human life from the cradle to the grave, and guides the soul on its lonely passage to another and better world. Like the Person of our Lord and Saviour to whom it bears witness, it is divine as well as human. The Holy Spirit is the invisible power behind the writers and quickens their words, which contain the eternal truth of God. Other books pass in rapid succession and die away. This book of books is ever young and fresh with an ever-enlarging circle of readers, and readapts itself in ever-improving versions to every age in every land. It will endure, an omnipresent and perennial force, as long as human souls are to be saved and guided to heaven.

The reception of the Revised Version of the New Testament in May, 1881, affords a striking proof of the powerful hold which the book has upon the English-speaking race. More than a million of copies were ordered from the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge before the day of publication, and within a few months more than twenty reprints of different sizes and prices appeared in the United States, all of which met with a ready and some with an extensive sale. It is probably not too much to say that before the close of the year nearly three millions of copies were sold. Such a fact stands isolated and alone in the whole history of literature, and furnishes the best answer to the attacks and sneers of modern infidelity. If England and America occupy to-day such a high position in every department of civilization and power, they owe it in great part to their regard for the Bible, as the sacred ark of every household, and the written conscience of every soul.

ORIGIN.

The twenty-seven books collected in the New Testament were written by a number of authors, eight at least (nine, in case the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by Paul). For each book there was some special occasion, each had its distinct purpose, and between the writing of the earliest and latest parts nearly half a century intervened. The agreement, under these circumstances, is truly wonderful, and the adaptation of a volume, thus penned, for all ages and classes is not less so. Nothing will account for such agreement and adaptation save a supernatural element in the composition; but we are now concerned with the human conditions which called forth these writings.

Christ wrote nothing; but is Himself the book of life to be read by all. He is written on the world's history and on men's hearts, and furnishes an unending theme of holy thoughts, discourses, and songs of praise. So, too, the Lord chose none of His Apostles, Paul excepted, from among the learned; He did not train them to literary authorship, nor expressly command them to perform such labor. They were to preach the glad tidings of salvation.

Personal oral teaching was the means used for first propagating the gospel and founding the Church; as it is to-day the indispensable instrumentality. No book of the New Testament was written until about twenty years after the resurrection of Christ, and more than half a century had passed before John wrote the fourth Gospel.

As the Church extended, the field became too large for the personal attention of the Apostles, and exigencies arose which demanded epistolary correspondence. The Epistles were first in order of time, although they assumed an acquaintance with the leading facts of the life of Christ, which had already been communicated by oral instruction. The vital interests of Christianity, as well as the wants of coming generations, demanded also a faithful record of the life and teachings of Christ, by perfectly trustworthy witnesses. For oral tradition, among fallible men, is subject to so many changes, that it loses in certainty, till at last it can no longer be clearly distinguished from the additions and corruptions. Our Gospels were not written too late for accuracy; but they were none too early to guard against error, for there was already danger of a wilful distortion of the history and doctrine of Christianity by Judaizing and paganizing errorists.

THE STYLE.

The New Testament was written in Hellenistic Greek, *i. e.*, in that idiom of Macedonian Greek spoken by the Jews of the Dispersion (called Hellenists) at the time of Christ. It has a Greek body, a Hebrew soul, and a Christian spirit. The most beautiful language of heathendom and the venerable language of the Jews are here combined, baptized with the spirit of Christianity, and made the picture of silver for the golden apple of the eternal truth of the gospel. The style is singularly adapted to men of every class and grade of culture, affording the child simple nourishment for its religious wants, and the profoundest thinker inexhaustible matter of study. It is the Book for all, as it is the revelation of the God of all.

THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Apostles all drew their doctrine from personal contact with the divine human history of the crucified and risen Saviour, and from the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, revealing the person and work of Christ in them, and opening to them His discourses and acts. This divine enlightenment is inspiration, governing not only the composition of the sacred writings, but also the oral instructions of their authors; not merely an act, but a permanent state. The Apostles lived and moved continually in the element of truth. They spoke, wrote, and

acted from the Spirit of truth ; and this, not as passive instruments, but as conscious and free agents. For the Holy Spirit does not supersede the gifts and peculiarities of nature, ordained by the Lord ; it sanctifies them to the service of the kingdom of God. Inspiration, however, is concerned only with moral and religious truths, and the communication of what is necessary to salvation. Incidental matters of geography, history, archæology, and of mere personal interest, can be regarded as directed by inspiration only so far as they really affect religious truth.

The New Testament should be studied, carefully and with the help of all the light which human learning can shed upon it, for it is a human book ; but also and chiefly in a devout manner under the illuminating influence of the same Spirit who inspired its authors, for it is a Divine book. That Spirit is promised to the prayerful reader, and without that help, the study will only be that of the 'natural man who 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged' (1 Cor. 2: 14).

ORGANIC ARRANGEMENT.

While the New Testament forms one harmonious whole, it was written by different men, inspired indeed, and yet free and conscious agents. The peculiar character, education, and sphere of the several writers therefore necessarily show themselves in their writings. The truth of the gospel, in itself infinite, can adapt itself to every class, every temperament, every order of talent, and every habit of thought. Like the light of the sun, it breaks into various colors according to the nature of the bodies on which it falls ; like the jewel, it emits a new radiance at every turn. The harmony will appear more fully as we recognize the minor differences ; the fulness of the truth will be manifest as we discover the various types of Apostolic teaching.

These types result mainly from the historical difference between Jewish and Gentile Christians. We read of Apostles of the circumcision, and Apostles of the uncircumcision. The former represented the historical, traditional, conservative principle ; the latter, the principle of freedom, independence, and progress. John rises above the division to the highest harmony. Subordinate differences of temperament, style, etc., have also been noticed. James has been distinguished as

the Apostle of the law ; Peter as the Apostle of hope ; Paul as the Apostle of faith ; and John as the Apostle of love. The four Gospels present similar differences ; the first having close affinity to the position of James, the second to that of Peter, the third to that of Paul, the fourth being the work of John himself.

These types of Apostolic teaching exhibit Christianity in the whole fulness of its life ; they form the theme for the variations of the succeeding ages of the Church. But Christ is the key-note, harmonizing all the discords and resolving all the mysteries of the history of His kingdom.

USUAL DIVISION.

The usual DIVISION of the books is HISTORICAL (the four Gospels and Acts), DOCTRINAL (all the Epistles), PROPHETICAL (the Book of the Revelation). The Book of Acts was originally included among the Epistles. It forms a transition from the historical to the doctrinal books, giving the historical basis for the Epistles, by narrating the foundation of the Church by the Apostles.

The three classes of Books are related to each other, as regeneration, sanctification, and glorification ; as foundation, house, and dome. Jesus Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all. In the Gospels He walks in human form upon the earth, accomplishing the work of redemption. In the Acts and Epistles He founds the Church, and fills and guides it by His Spirit. And, at last, in the visions of the Apocalypse, He comes again in glory, and with His bride reigns forever upon the new earth in the city of God.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE BOOKS.

This cannot be determined with absolute certainty, as no dates are given in the books themselves. Some of the Epistles of Paul, especially that to the Romans, contain indications and allusions which enable us to assign them to a particular year. The Epistle of James, and the Epistles to the Thessalonians were probably written first, the writings of John last. The three Synoptic Gospels must have been composed before the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), which by them is predicted as a future event. The Acts were written after 63, yet before the death of Paul, as they suddenly close with his imprisonment in Rome.

For all practical purposes, the following classification is sufficient :—

A. D. 50-60: First series of Pauline Epistles: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians (57), Romans (58). The Epistle of James is by some put before A. D. 50, by others after A. D. 60.

A. D. 60-70: Second series of Pauline Epistles: Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, Philippians (61-63); probably Hebrews (64).

Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, the Apocalypse.

Uncertain date, but before 67: The Pastoral Epistles (2 Timothy written last), the Epistles of James (?), Peter, Jude.

A. D. 70-100, probably late in the century: Gospel of John, three Epistles of John. Some put the Apocalypse last, under Domitian, A. D. 95, but it was probably written shortly after the death of Nero, A. D. 68 or 69.

§ 2. *The Gospels.*

*"Paradisi hæc fluentia
Nova fluunt sacramenta
Quæ descendunt coelitus:
His quadrigis deportatur
Mundo Deus, sublimatur
Istis arca vectibus."*

Adam of St. Victor, 1170.

"So from their source in Paradise
The four mysterious rivers rise,
And life to earth is given:
On these four wheels and staves, behold,
God and his ark are onward rolled,
High above earth in Heaven."

(Translated by Dr. E. H. Plumptre.)

NAME.

The word 'gospel' (God's spell, good spell, or story, message) is the nearest English equivalent for the Greek *evangelion*, and means good news, glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ. It is also applied to the four books of the New Testament, which contain the fourfold authentic record of the one gospel of Christ, *according to* Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (not the Gospel *of* Matthew, etc.).

CHARACTER AND AIM.

The canonical Gospels do not assume to be full biographies of Jesus, but give only a selection of the characteristic features of His life and work, for the practical purpose of leading the reader to a saving faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah and Son of God (John 20: 31). They are not photographs which represent the momentary image in a single attitude, but living pictures from repeated sittings, which represent a combination of the varied expressions and aspects of Christ's person.

DIVISION.

The first and fourth Gospels were composed by the Apostles Matthew and John, the second and third, under the influence of Peter and Paul, and by their immediate disciples, Mark and Luke ; hence they are indirectly likewise of Apostolic origin and canonical authority.

The first three Gospels, while beginning the history at different points, confine themselves in their accounts of our Lord's ministry to events which occurred in Galilee, until the final journey to death at Jerusalem ; John specifically mentions the visits to Jerusalem, and tells of His ministry in Judæa with some detail. The first three Evangelists proceed on a common outline and often agree to the letter. Hence they are termed *Synoptists*. But all the Gospels meet in Jerusalem and in common, though independently, relate the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. Matthew was written for the Jews, Mark for the Romans, Luke for the Greeks, John for advanced Christians ; but all suit every nation and every age to the end of time.

The fourth Gospel was called very early, the *spiritual* Gospel. Luther says it is 'the one true, tender, chief Gospel'; Ernesti names it, 'the heart of Christ.' It is doubtless the sublimest of all literary compositions. Needed by the Church when it was written and ever since, to supplement the Synoptic Gospels, there is no evidence that the Apostle wrote it with such a conscious purpose. Certainly it detracts nothing from their trustworthiness or value.

COMMON ORIGIN.

These works have their common source in the personal intercourse of the writers with Christ, and in the oral tradition of the apostles and other eye-witnesses. Illiterate fishermen of Galilee could not have drawn such a portrait of Jesus if he had not sat for it. It would take more than a Jesus to invent a Jesus. The gospel tradition, being constantly repeated in public and in private circles, assumed a fixed, stereotyped form ; the more readily, on account of the reverence of the first disciples for every word of their divine Master. Hence the striking agreement of the first three Gospels, which in matter and form, are only variations of the same theme. The Gospel of Mark, the confidant of Peter, is a faithful copy of the gospel preached and otherwise communicated by this Apostle ; with the use perhaps of Hebrew records which Peter may have made from time to time under the fresh impression of the events themselves.

Matthew was himself, for the most part, an eye-witness. Luke, the companion of Paul, had access to written documents on certain parts of the life of Jesus, according to his own statement (1 : 1-4).

There is good reason from the internal structure of the Synoptic Gospels to believe, that the three Evangelists had no access to either of the other two Gospels in their present form ; that all drew from the same living tradition, but independently. They differ where we should least expect it, if they had seen the other Gospels, as for instance in the words of the Lord's Prayer, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the inscription on the Cross. To suppose that they varied intentionally to give an appearance of originality is absurd : the character both of the writers and the writings forbids it.

TIME OF COMPOSITION.

As to the time of composition of the Synoptic Gospels, they may be assigned to the seventh decade of the first century, or between A. D. 60-70. They bear strong internal evidence of having been written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70) ; for this is described by them in the eschatological discourses of Christ (Matt. ch. 24 ; Mark ch. 13 ; Luke ch. 21) as an event still future, though nigh at hand. Had they been written after the year 70, they would have made some allusion to the actual occurrence, and so arranged the discourses as would enable the reader clearly to discriminate between the traits referring to that event and the traits looking far beyond to the final judgment of the world which is foreshadowed by the tragic fall of Jerusalem. This internal evidence is confirmed by the testimony of antiquity (Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, etc.), and has not been invalidated by that destructive criticism which has vainly endeavored to put the composition far down to the close of the first or the beginning of the second century in order to weaken their historical credibility.

As to the Gospel of John which omits the eschatological discourses, it was undoubtedly written after A. D. 70 and probably towards the close of the first century, say between 80 and 90.

CREDIBILITY.

The Gospels make upon every unsophisticated reader the impression of absolute honesty. They tell the story without embellishment, without comments, with the single aim to tell the truth and nothing but the truth. They frankly record the weaknesses and failings of the

disciples, including themselves, the rebukes which their Master administered to them for their carnal misunderstandings and want of faith, their cowardice and desertion in the most trying hour, their utter despondency after the crucifixion, the ambitious request of John and James, the denial of Peter, the treason of Judas. They dwell even with circumstantial minuteness upon the great sin of the leader of the Twelve, especially the Gospel of Mark, who derived his details no doubt from Peter's own lips. They conceal nothing, they apologize for nothing, they exaggerate nothing. Their authors are utterly unconcerned about their own fame, and withhold their own name; they are lost in the story of Jesus, which carries its own irresistible force and charm to every heart. The very discrepancies in the minor details increase confidence and exclude the suspicion of collusion; for it is a generally acknowledged principle in legal evidence that circumstantial variation in the testimony of witnesses confirms their substantial agreement.

The credibility of the canonical Gospels receives also negative confirmation from the numerous apocryphal Gospels which, by their immeasurable inferiority and childishness, prove the utter inability of the human imagination to produce such a character as the historical Jesus of Nazareth.

§ 3. *The Gospel according to Matthew.*

THE AUTHOR.

MATTHEW (or LEVI; see Mark 2: 14; Luke 5: 27, 29) was a publican, or tax-gatherer, called by our Lord from the toll-booth, near the Sea of Galilee, where he was performing his secular duty (Matt. 9: 9-13). The name is derived from the same word as Matthias (Acts 1: 23, 26), or Theodore, meaning 'gift of God.' It was probably adopted as his new Christian name (comp. Simon, Peter; Saul, Paul). His former avocation was regarded by the Jews with contempt, but gave him an extensive knowledge of human nature and accurate business habits, which tended to fit him for his great work as an Evangelist. The topical arrangement of his Gospel may be largely due to the influence of his previous occupation. The New Testament is silent in regard to his special labors. Tradition says he was murdered in Ethi-

opia, while at prayer ; but according to the earlier statement of Clement of Alexandria, he died a natural death.

The first Gospel is his immortal monument. If he had done nothing else, he must be ranked among the most useful servants of Christ. In this book he still preaches the gospel to all nations (28 : 19).

THE GOSPEL.

That this Apostle was the author of the first canonical Gospel, there is no reason to doubt. Seventeen independent witnesses of the first four centuries attest its genuineness, including Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tatian, Celsus (the heathen), and Tertullian. The evidence is more positive and explicit than that which supports any non-biblical work of the same age. The Gospel was written for Jewish Christians, first in Hebrew, probably in Palestine, afterwards in its present Greek form about A. D. 60, certainly before A. D. 70.

It presents Christ as the last and greatest Prophet and Lawgiver, as the Fulfiller of the Old Testament, as the Messiah and King of Israel. The arrangement is not strictly chronological, but topical, it groups together similar works and sayings of Christ. It deserves the first place in the New Testament ; for it forms the best link between the Law and the Gospel. It occupies the same position in the Canon of the New Testament, as the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, giving us in the Sermon on the Mount a counterpart of the legislation from Mount Sinai, the fundamental law of the Christian Church. Its leading object may be found in the declaration : ' I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill ' (5 : 17). With this must be closely joined the solemn words (of ver. 20) : ' Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' In it ' the life of Jesus is presented as forming part of the history and life of the Jewish nation ; and hence as the fulfilment of the hereditary blessing of Abraham.' It begins with the royal pedigree of Christ and the adoration of the wise men who represent the believing Gentiles : and it consistently ends with the command to His disciples to make all nations, by baptism and Christian nurture, subjects of His kingdom, which is as wide as the earth and as enduring as heaven.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW.

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah.

1: 1 ¹THE book of the ²generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

¹ Or, *The genealogy of Jesus Christ.*

² Or, *birth:* as in ver. 18.

CONTENTS. THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST. Two lists of the human ancestors of Christ are given in the New Testament: Matthew, writing for Jewish Christians, begins with Abraham; Luke (3: 23-38), writing for Gentile Christians, goes back to Adam, the father of all men (for other points of difference, see on ver. 16). According to his human nature, Christ was the descendant of Abraham, David, and Mary; according to his divine nature, He was the eternal and only-begotten Son of God, begotten from the essence of the Father. John (1: 1-18) begins his Gospel by setting forth his divine genealogy, which goes back to the depths of eternity. In Him, the God-man, all the ascending aspirations of human nature towards God, and all the descending revelations of God to man meet in perfect harmony. Matthew begins at Abraham: 1. to prove to Jewish Christians that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah; 2. to show the connection between the Old and New Testaments through a succession of living persons ending in Jesus Christ, who is the subject of the Gospel and the object of the faith it requires.

Christ is the fulfilment of all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, the heir of all its blessings and promises, the dividing line and connecting link of ages, the end of the old, and the beginning of the new history of mankind. In the long list of his human ancestors, we have a cloud of witnesses, a compend of the history of preparation for the coming of Christ down to the Virgin Mary, in whom culminated the longing and hope of Israel for redemption. It is a history of divine promises and their fulfilment, of human faith and hope for the 'desire of all nations.' In the list are named illustrious heroes of faith, but also obscure persons, written in the secret book of God, as well as gross sinners redeemed by grace, which reaches the lowest depths as well as the most exalted heights of society.

Matthew's table is divided into three parts, corresponding to three periods of Jewish preparation for the coming of Christ (see on ver. 17).

Ver. 1. **The book of the generation** ('book of genesis'). Literally, 'book of birth, birth-book,' i. e. pedigree, genealogy. The title of the genealogical table, vers. 1-17, not of the whole Gospel, nor of the first two chapters, nor of chap. 1. Possibly the title of an original (Hebrew) document, used by the Evangelist. Comp. the Hebrew *sepher tholedoth*, Gen. 5: 1 (and 2: 4).—**Jesus Christ.** This combination is the Gospel in a nut-shell, a declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the great truth, which the following

- 2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and
 3 Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; and Judah be-
 gat Perez and Zerah of Tamar; and Perez begat
 4 Hezron; and Hezron begat ¹Ram; and ¹Ram begat
 Amminadab: and Amminadab begat Nahshon; and
 5 Nahshon begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz of

¹ Gr. *Aram*.

narrative is to establish.—**Jesus.** The personal name (ver. 21)—the Hebrew Joshua (comp. Heb. 4: 8)—Jehovah is Helper, Saviour (Ex. 24: 13; Num. 13: 16; Neh. 7: 7). A name frequent among the Jews, but fulfilled in Christ. **Christ.** The Greek word for the Hebrew *Messiah*, i. e., The Anointed One; the official title. Applied to the three officers of the Old Testament theocracy: prophets (1 Kings 19: 16), priests (Lev. 4: 3; 5: 16; Ps. 105: 15), and kings (1 Sam. 24: 7, 11; Ps. 2: 2; Dan. 9: 25, 26). Here all three offices are combined and perfected. Christ is our Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King. That of 'King' was most prominent in the expectations of the Jews.—**The Son of David.** 'David the king,' ver. 6. From him descended One 'born King of the Jews' (2: 2).—**The Son of Abraham.** The genealogy is traced back thus far, because 'to Abraham and his seed were the promises made' (Gal. 3: 16). The Epistle to the Galatians shows the connection of the gospel and the covenant with Abraham. 'Son,' here is almost—'seed' there; both refer to Christ.

Ver. 2. **Abraham begat Isaac.** 'Begat,' repeated throughout, makes prominent the idea of a living connection and succession.—**Judah,** the direct ancestor, is named: **his brethren** are added, to indicate the connection with the whole covenant nation.

Ver. 3. **Tamar,** a heathen woman, guilty of intentional incest, under the impulse of misdirected faith and ambition to become the mother of kings and prophets. The Jews and some commentators seek to excuse her; but the stain must be admitted. The mention of this name not only proves the correctness of the genealogy, but tends to humble Jewish pride and exalt the grace of God. Gen. 38: 11-30.

Ver. 5. **Rahab.** Another heathen woman, a sinner also. Undoubtedly the woman of Jericho (Joshua 2: 1; 6: 23, 25). But by heroic faith she rose above her degradation. She is also honorably mentioned Jas. 1: 25 and Heb. 11: 31.—**Ruth.** Still another heathen woman; though personally not criminal, but a model of filial devotion, to her also a stain attached according to the Jewish law. The book which bears her name and tells her story is a charming episode of domestic virtue and happiness in the anarchical period of the Judges, when might was right. Its position in the canon is a recognition of the working of God's grace outside of Israel, and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles.—Compare the record in Ruth 4: 18-22. The long interval between the taking of Jericho and the birth of David

Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed
6 begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king.

And David begat Solomon of her *that had been the*
7 *wife* of Uriah; and Solomon begat Rehoboam; and
Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat ¹Asa;
8 and ¹Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat
9 Joram; and Joram begat Uzziah; and Uzziah begat
Jotham; and Jotham begat Ahaz; and Ahaz begat
10 Hezekiah; and Hezekiah begat Manasseh; and Ma-
11 nasseh begat ²Amon; and ²Amon begat Josiah; and
Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time
of the ³carrying away to Babylon.

12 And after the ³carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah
begat ⁴Shealtiel; and ⁴Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel;

¹ Gr. *Asaph*.² Gr. *Amos*.³ Or, *removal to Babylon*.⁴ Gr. *Salathiel*.

(866 years according to Ussher), has led to the supposition that some names are omitted here, as is certainly the case in vers. 8-11. But Rahab was probably young at the time Jericho was taken, Boaz old at the time of his marriage, and David was the youngest son of an old man. See further under ver. 17.

Ver. 6. **David the king.** Emphatic as the culminating name of an ascending series, and as marking an epoch in the genealogy. Even here pride is humbled; the wife of a heathen (Uriah was a Hittite) is mentioned, David's partner in the deepest guilt of his life, but also in his most profound penitence (Ps. li.).—**The wife of Uriah.** The E. V. and the R. V. insert 'of her *that had been the wife*.' Solomon was legitimate; the first child from Bathsheba died. 2 Sam. 12: 14-24.

Ver. 8. Between **Joram** and **Uzziah**, three names are intentionally omitted: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, probably to reduce the number of generations. These three were chosen, either because personally unworthy, or because descendants to the fourth generation from Jezebel, through Athaliah.

Ver. 11. **Josiah.** The next king was Jehoiakim (2 Kings 24: 6; 2 Chron. 26: 8). He was forcibly placed on the throne by the king of Egypt, hence unworthy of mention.—**The removal, or, the carrying away.** Spoken of indefinitely, as it extended over a considerable period of time during three successive reigns. The word used does not necessarily imply a forcible removal, the Jews being accustomed to speak of the Captivity in this mild way. The course is downward through these royal generations.

Ver. 12. The succeeding list cannot be verified, although we meet with the names of Shealtiel (Salathiel), Zerubbabel (Ezra 3: 2; Neh.

13 and Zerubbabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Elia-
 14 kim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc;
 and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;
 15 and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan;
 16 and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph
 the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who
 is called Christ.

12: 1; Hag. 1: 1) in the Old Testament. 'In 1 Chron. 3: 19, Zerubbabel is said to have been the son of Pedaiah, brother of Salathiel. Either this may have been a different Zerubbabel, or Salathiel may, according to the law, have raised up seed to his brother' (Alford).

Ver. 13. **Abiud.** This name is not mentioned among the sons of Zerubbabel in 1 Chron. 3: 19, 20. He is supposed by some to be identical with *Hananiah* (1 Chron. 3: 19); by others with *Hodiah* (1 Chron. 8: 24), one of his descendants, who is further supposed to be the Judah of Luke 3: 26; all this, however, is conjecture. The downward course reaches its lowest point in the humble carpenter of Nazareth. The promised Saviour was to be 'a root out of a dry ground' (Is. 53: 2).

Ver. 16. **Joseph**, the legal father, whose genealogy is here given. In Luke 3: 23, Joseph is called 'the son of Heli.' The two Evangelists independently followed two documents drawn upon a different plan of succession. Explanations:—

(1.) Luke gives the genealogy of Mary; Heli being her father, and the father-in-law of Joseph. This is the most probable view, since the writers of the New Testament assume that Jesus was descended from David through his mother (Luke 1: 32; Acts 2: 30; 13: 23; Rom. 1: 3). It involves no positive difficulty, and is in accordance with the prominence given to Mary in the opening chapters of Luke. See Notes on Luke 3: 23. This passage must then be explained: 'Jesus . . . being the *son*, as was supposed, of Joseph, the *son* [in law] of Heli [the father of Mary]'; or: 'Jesus . . . was reputed to be the son of Joseph, but was in fact descended from Heli through his mother' (comp. Wieseler, *Beiträge zur richtigen Würdigung der Evangelien*, 1869, pp. 135 sqq., and in part also Weiss, in the sixth ed. of Meyer on *Luke*, 1878, p. 321). The remark of Luke, 'as was supposed,' intimates that he means to give the descent by actual birth through Mary. It is remarkable that the Talmud (tr. *Chageg.* 77, 4) calls the mother of Jesus 'the daughter of Heli,' thus independently confirming Luke.

(2.) Both are genealogies of Joseph; Matthew giving the *legal*, Luke the *natural* descent, or conversely. This assumes one or two, levirate marriages in the family of Joseph. (A levirate marriage was one in which a man wedded the widow of his elder brother, the children being legally reckoned as descendants of the first husband: comp. Deut. 25: 5, 6; Matt. 22: 24, and parallel passages.) It is

- 17 So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the ¹carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the ¹carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.

¹ Or, removal to Babylon.

supposed that *Jacob* (Matthew) and *Heli* (Luke) were brothers or half-brothers, one of whom died without issue, the other marrying the childless wife. If brothers, *Matthan* (Matthew) and *Matthat* (Luke) refer to the same person. The objection to the whole theory is, that Jewish usage would insert in the genealogy not the name of the second husband (the real father), but only that of the first husband who died childless. The theory that Jacob and Heli were brothers compels us to assume an identity which is opposed rather than favored by the similarity of the names: *Matthan* and *Matthat*. The theory that they were half-brothers assumes a second levirate marriage in the case of *Matthan* and *Matthat*. Besides the double difficulty thus created, there is no evidence that the levirate usage applied to half-brothers. The view that the names *Matthan* and *Matthat* refer to the same person, involves the cousinship of Joseph and Mary, which is nowhere alluded to.

(8.) Matthew gives the table of *royal* succession or heirship to the throne of David and Solomon (the *jus successionis*); while Luke traces the *actual* descent of Joseph (the *jus sanguinis*) through Nathan and private persons from a collateral line. But then Matthew could not properly use the verb 'begat;' for the line of Solomon failed in Jeconiah (Jer. 22: 80).

At all events, the genealogies are not irreconcilable, and the differences prove the independence and trustworthiness of Matthew and Luke.

Of whom was born. The form here changes in accordance with the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus.

Ver. 17. **Fourteen generations.** There were exactly fourteen generations from Abraham to David; the two other series are made to correspond. But to make out the second and third series, one name must be counted twice. We prefer (with Bengel and Bleek) to repeat that of David, and close the second series with Josiah, since Jeconiah and his brethren are only indefinitely included in it; the third then begins with Jeconiah, and ends with Christ. Thus:—

B. C. 1996-1085.	B. C. 1085-588.	B. C. 588-4.
Abraham, Isaac,	David, Solomon,	Jeconiah, Shealtiel,

CHAPTER 1: 18-25.

The Circumstances of the Birth of Jesus Christ.

18 Now the ¹birth ²of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph,
before they came together she was found with child of

¹ Or, *generation*: as in ver. 1.

² Some ancient authorities read *of the Christ*.

B. C. 1996-1085.	B. C. 1085-588.	B. C. 588-4.
Jacob, Judah, Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David.	Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Joriah.	Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus.

In a nation where few books and records existed, such genealogical tables would be put into a form easy to be remembered. Hence, the omissions and the divisions which cover the three periods of Israelitish history. The numbers here involved, two, three, and seven, had a symbolical significance among the Jews; but this symbolism is not the prominent reason for the arrangement. It has been noticed that the forty-two generations correspond with the forty-two years of the wandering in the wilderness. Thus Jesus is the sacred heir of the ancient world: as heir of the blessing, the Prophet of the world; as heir of the sufferings entailed by the curse, its atoning High Priest; as heir of the promise, its King.

The Birth of Christ, vers. 18-25.

CONTENTS. The circumstances preceding the Nativity: Mary, doubted by her betrothed husband; his design of putting her away privately; her vindication by means of a dream; Joseph's faith; the name in accordance with prophecy; the actual birth. As the sinless second Adam, and as the Saviour of men, Jesus could not come into the world by ordinary human generation, but by a new creative act of God, or the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit. Sin is propagated by generation, the active agency of man; and what is born of the flesh is flesh. God formed the first Adam of the mother earth; the Holy Spirit formed the second Adam out of the flesh of a pure virgin. Even the heathen had a dim conception that the ideal of the race could not be

19 the ¹Holy Ghost. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public

¹ Or, *Holy Spirit*: and so throughout this book.

realized without supernatural generations of sages and heroes from a pure virgin (Buddha, Zoroaster, Romulus, Pythagoras, Plato). The heathen myths are carnal anticipations of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Meyer and Keil count Jeconiah twice, since he belongs to the period before and during the Captivity. Others, with less reason, repeat the name of Josiah; others make no repetition, but reckon the third series from Shealtiel to Christ, including the name of Mary, which seems forced.

Ver. 18. **The birth of Jesus Christ.** Same word (*γένεσις*) as in ver. 1 ('generation'). Here it means 'origin.' The more usual word (*γέννησις*) implies a 'begetting;' the choice of this word indicates something peculiar in this birth, as does the form: 'Abraham begat Isaac,' etc., etc.; 'the birth of Jesus Christ, however, was in this wise.' 'For,' in the next clause, implies: there is need of a particular account, for the circumstances were peculiar. The best critics, however, omit the word.—**His mother Mary having been betrothed to Joseph.** 'Betrothed,' not yet 'espoused.' The betrothal was previous to the discovery. After betrothal, unfaithfulness on the part of the woman was deemed adultery. Betrothal was a formal ceremony from patriarchal times, and symbolized by the gift of a ring and other jewels (Gen. 24: 53). It lasted generally a whole year.—**Before they came together,** lived together in one house as man and wife.—**She was found.** Perhaps by herself, according to the revelation made to her (Luke 1: 26 sq.). If this verse points to a time after her return from visiting Elizabeth (see notes on Luke 1: 39 sq.), her condition would soon be apparent.—**Of the Holy Ghost** (or, 'Spirit'). A statement of fact, not a part of the discovery, or Joseph would not have been perplexed. The Third Person of the Trinity is meant, as the creative principle of a holy human life. Comp. Luke 1: 35. 'Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,' is an article not only in our Apostles' Creed, but in nearly all other creeds of the ancient Church. On the other hand, neither the Scriptures nor the early Church know anything of the supernatural, immaculate conception of Mary, which was proclaimed as a dogma by Pope Pius IX. in 1854. Christ is the sole, the absolute exception to the universal rule of sinfulness; a miracle in history. Mary calls God her (my) 'Saviour' (Luke 1: 47); consequently she knew herself to be a sinner in need of salvation; but she was kept free from all influence of sin while bearing the Saviour of sinners, and probably never committed actual transgression after His birth.

Ver. 19. **Joseph, according to the Jewish law, her husband.** Comp. ver. 20; Gen. 29: 21; Deut. 22: 24.—**A righteous man,**

20 example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is ¹conceived in her is

¹ Gr. *begotten*.

a man of uprightness. His conduct does not compel us to accept the sense: a kind man. He was influenced by justice. Mary had possibly told him of the revelation made to her: he was just in giving her a hearing, and then, in consequence, in not wishing to make her a public example. At the same time, justice led him, as a Jew, to the intention of putting her away, though privately. The former phrase is the more remarkable, since such justice is rarely exercised to one in the situation of Mary. So high a regard for the honor and reputation of a woman is most rare in Eastern countries. Mary's strong faith may have influenced him also.—**Not willing** expresses the mere wish; **was minded**, the intention; a distinction not always recognized in discussing this passage.—**Privily** (better, 'privately' or 'secretly'). In the conflict between his sense of right and his regard for Mary, he chose the middle way of private divorce. The eternal Son of God exposed himself, at his very entrance into the world, to the suspicion of illegitimacy! One chosen to be His mother was suspected of unfaithfulness by her husband!—The two kinds of divorce among the Jews. The private divorce here spoken of consisted in giving the wife a bill of divorce (Deut. 24: 1-3; Matt. 19: 8), without assigning a reason for it. The public divorce would have involved the charge of adultery, and consequent punishment, stoning to death. By preferring the former, Joseph exhibited not only kindness, but self-sacrifice, since her condition, when publicly known, would be reckoned his disgrace. The writ of divorcement was as necessary for the betrothed as for the married.

Ver. 20. **But when he thought on these things.** As 'a righteous man,' he was pained and grieved; yet not having entirely lost confidence in her, he thought the matter over; then came the deliverance from doubt. An honest doubter will obtain light, but not he who gives way to passion. Man's extremity, God's opportunity.—**An angel of the Lord.** Gabriel had appeared to Mary (Luke 1: 26); here the angel is not named. Angels, who are 'ministering spirits,' appeared to reveal God's will before the coming of Christ. Since the full revelation of the One Great Mediator, the necessity for their appearance has ceased. The phrase, 'The angel of the Lord,' in the Old Testament, often refers to the Second Person of the Trinity; but this is certainly not the case here, where the definite article is not used. The revelations to Joseph in the Old Testament, and Joseph in the New, were always made in dreams. 'The announcement was

21 of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son ;
 and thou shalt call his name **JESUS** ; for it is he that
 22 shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is
 come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was
 spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,
 23 Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall
 bring forth a son,
 And they shall call his name ¹Immanuel ;

¹ Gr. *Emmanuel*.

made to Mary openly, for in Mary's case faith and concurrence of will were necessary ; the communication was of a higher kind, and referred to a thing future' (Alford).—**Thou Son of David**. A fitting title in view of the communication to be made.—**Fear not**, either for yourself or for her.—**Mary thy wife**. He is reminded that she is legally his wife.—**Conceived**, better 'begotten' (so in Greek), since Joseph is referred not so much to Mary's state, as to its cause.

Ver. 21. **Jesus**. Comp. ver. 1.—**For it is he, alone, that shall save his people**. Joseph, probably, understood this as referring to the Jews ; but the phrase, **from their sins**, spiritualizes the people as well as the salvation. Not temporal deliverance, nor mere legal justification, but actual salvation from sin as a polluting power in our nature. In the revelation to Mary, the glory of Messiah is spoken of ; here His saving power ; not because she needed salvation less than Joseph, but because he was troubled by doubts regarding her, and now he is told that what he in his doubt deemed sin was the means of salvation from sin. The words 'He' and 'from their sins,' are emphatic, pointing to the office and work of the Messiah. 'His people' has no special emphasis ; they are those whom He saves from their sins.

Ver. 22. **But all this is come to pass**. An explanation of the Evangelist, who everywhere points to the fulfilment of prophecy.—**That, i. e., 'in order that.'** The event fulfilled God's purpose as predicted, and therefore took place. The prophecy depends on the fact as purposed in the Divine mind.—**Fulfilled**. This word has its usual sense here as applied to prophecy.—**By the Lord**, who spoke **through the prophet, i. e., Isaiah (7: 14)**. The writing followed the speaking.

Ver. 23. **The virgin, not a virgin**. The prophetic spirit of Isaiah had in view a particular virgin, the mother of the true Emmanuel. The quotation is but slightly varied from the text of the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, in common use among the Jews at that time. All the variations are merely in form. Evidently the Evangelist considered these occurrences to be the first complete fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah. There had probably been a previous fulfilment in the days of Ahaz, viz., a sign given to

24 which is, being interpreted, God with us. And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord 25 commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and • knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

him respecting the temporal deliverance of the kingdom of Judah. Some refer it to the wife of the prophet. But a higher reference is clearly involved. The language of the prophet (Is. 7: 13) indicates something more important, and what then occurred presents in many points a type of what is now spoken of. The Old and New Testaments are related to each other as type and antitype, prophecy and fulfilment, preparation and consummation. The New Testament writers do not, however, use the Scriptures by way of accommodation; whenever a passage is explained by them as having a second fulfilment, as in the present case, that fulfilment is in accordance with the first, only fuller, broader, more spiritual. Whether the prophets themselves were conscious of this fuller sense, is immaterial; for our passage tells of what 'was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.'—**Which is, being interpreted.** This indicates that the whole explanation is that of the Evangelist, not of the angel.—**God with us.** Applied to Christ in the highest and most glorious sense: God incarnate among us, He is still Immanuel, God with us; once He came among men and identified Himself with them; now He saves men, and identifies them with Himself.

Ver. 24. **And (or 'then') Joseph—did.** He believed, therefore he obeyed. Thus early in the Gospel is obedience represented as the fruit of faith. Man fell by disobedience; he is saved by obedience to God's will.—**Took unto him his wife.** This implies the benediction by a priest, the marriage-feast, and the removal of the bride from her home to that of her husband.

Ver. 25. **Knew her not.** A Hebrew form for conjugal cohabitation; comp. Luke 1: 36.—**A son.** The word 'first-born' in the A. V. is omitted by some of the best authorities, and was probably inserted from Luke 2: 7, where it is genuine beyond a doubt. It does not of itself prove that Mary had other children, nor does till of necessity imply this. Yet Matthew, with the whole history of Christ before him, would scarcely have used the expression, had he held the notion of the perpetual virginity of Mary. It would have been easy to assert that by saying: he *never* knew her. Many Protestant commentators suppose that the genealogy of David found its end in Christ, and that Mary could not have given birth to children after having become the mother of the Saviour of the world. But this is a matter of sentiment rather than a conviction based on evidence. 'The brethren of our Lord' are frequently mentioned (four by name, besides sisters), in close connection with Mary, and apparently as members of her household. They are nowhere called His 'cousins,' as Jerome and Ro-

CHAPTER 2: 1-12.

The Visit and Adoration of the Magi.

2: 1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, ¹wise men

¹ Gr. *Magi*. Compare Esther 1: 13; Dan. 2: 12.

man Catholic commentators claim them to have been. They were probably either the children of Joseph by a former wife (the view of some Greek fathers), or the children of Joseph and Mary (as now held by many Protestant commentators). To the first view the genealogy of Joseph seems an insuperable objection; for the oldest son by the former marriage would have been his legal heir, and the genealogy out of place. The question, however, is complicated with other exegetical difficulties and doctrinal prejudices. The virginity of Mary up to the birth of Jesus is here the main point. The whole subject is fully discussed by Lange and Schaff in the English Ed. of Lange's Commentary, *Matthew*, pp. 255-260, and by Lightfoot, *Galat.* (who favors the Greek theory of older children from a former marriage of Joseph). See also Schaff, *Church History*, revised ed., vol. I., p. 272 ff.

The Visit and Adoration of the Magi, vers. 1-12.

THE DATE OF OUR LORD'S BIRTH. The visit of the Magi, while it does not determine the year of the birth of Christ, fixes a date *before* which it must have taken place. Herod, who died A. U. 750, was alive when Jesus was born (vers. 3-12), and therefore A. U. 750, or B. C. 4, is the latest date which can be assigned to the Nativity (see ver. 7). The other chronological data are, (1) the age of Jesus at the date of His baptism (Luke 3: 23); (2) the list of rulers named in Luke 3: 1; (3) the saying of the Jews at the first Passover after our Lord's baptism (John 2: 20): 'Forty and six years was this temple in building,' etc. To this some add (4) the remark of Luke respecting Zacharias (Luke 1: 5): 'of the course of Abijah;' (5) the appearance of the star (see ver. 2). It will appear from a reference to the notes on the various passages cited, that the more definite statements may be used to support the view which places the birth of Jesus at the close of A. U. 749, or at the beginning of 750. It is true none of them are decisive; yet, on the other hand, the arguments used against this view rest on the statements (such as 4 and 5) which are far from presenting assured chronological data. As much confusion exists in the minds of some in consequence of the reckoning from two eras, we insert a list of corresponding years. It should be carefully noted that the numerals are *ordinal*, standing for "first," "second," etc.

A. U.	749	750	751	752	753	754	755
B. C.	5	4	3	2	1	1	2 A. D.

If we fix the date at the close of 749, the common era is *four* years too late, not five, since we reckon from the close of the fifth year. See on Luke 2: 8, in regard to the time of the year.

But whatever be the date, the Saviour appeared in 'the fulness of the time' (Gal. 4: 4). The visit of the Magi is of itself an indication that the preparation for the coming of the Messiah was now complete. 'In the first chapter, the Evangelist points out the part which the *Jewish* people had in connection with the Messiah. Christ's genealogy

and His birth from the Virgin show that salvation was of the Jews. The second chapter, which records the arrival of the Magi from the East, presents the interest of the *Gentile* world in Christ. The Magi are, so to speak, the representatives of those pious Gentiles whose names are recorded in the Old Testament." Lange.

CONTENTS. Matthew tells none of the details of the Nativity (see Luke 2: 1-20), and makes no allusion to the fact that Joseph and Mary had previously resided in Nazareth. He brings into the foreground Joseph, while Luke tells of Mary. This difference is an evidence of truthfulness. Each chooses those facts which best accord with his purpose. The pictures are taken from different points of view; only real objects can be thus presented. In this chapter the Evangelist has grouped those events which further demonstrate the Messiahship of Jesus. The infant Saviour is recognized by representatives of the heathen world, in a state of expectancy; Judaism, with its better founded expectations, is hostile. The visit of the Magi excites the suspicion of Herod; this suspicion leads to the murder; the murder to the flight into Egypt; and then to the return to Nazareth instead of Bethlehem. Science (astrology) and history, nature and revelation, all point to the future greatness of the child. Prophecy directs whither the star leads; the Magi meet the dead orthodoxy of the Jews; the frightened ruler would defend himself with the sword against the 'born King of the Jews;' but the King is miraculously delivered. The visit of the Magi is profoundly significant: they were the forerunners of Gentile converts, and the whole occurrence foreshadows the reception given to the gospel in apostolic times. This section is the Gospel for the Epiphany, or Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles. Other events have been connected with the day, called also the Festival of the Three Kings.

Ver. 1. **Now when Jesus was born.** See chap. 1: 25. Further details are given in Luke 2: 1-21. The visit of the shepherds had already taken place, the presentation in the temple was either shortly before or after this visit of the Magi.—**Bethlehem of Judæa.** A small town situated on the crest of a small hill about six miles south of Jerusalem, famous in the history of Rachel, Ruth, David, and Christ. The present inhabitants (about 5,000) belong mostly to the Greek church; but the Latins and Armenians share in the Church of the Nativity, the oldest in Christendom (see Schaff, *Through Bible-Lands*, p. 220). The name means: *house of bread*, probably given on account of its great fertility. It is called Bethlehem Judah (Judg. 17: 7, 8; 1 Sam. 17: 12) to distinguish it from another town in Galilee (tribe of Zebulun) of the same name; also Ephrath (Gen. 35: 19; 48: 7) and Ephratah (Mic. 5: 2); also 'the city of David' (Luke 2: 4), because his birth-place (Ruth 1: 1-19; 1 Sam. 16). Its insignificance and its honor are contrasted in the prophecy (Mic. 5: 2) quoted by the scribes (ver. 6).—**Herod the king,** generally called in history Herod the Great, the son of the Edomite Antipater by an Arabian mother, an energetic, despotic, and blood-stained ruler. Antipater, who was made procurator of Judæa by Cæsar, appointed his son governor of Galilee at the age of fifteen. Herod was made tetrarch by Antony, but was driven away by Antigonos, a Maccabæan prince. Fleeing to Rome, he was there crowned king of Judæa by the Senate, through the favor of Antony, and by the help of the Romans actually obtained the throne.

2 from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, ¹Where is he

¹ Or, *Where is the King of the Jews that is born?*

Securing the favor of Augustus, he reigned thirty-seven years. A skillful ruler, fond of architectural embellishment, but extremely cruel and jealous, being charged with the murder of his wife and three sons. He died at the age of seventy, shortly after putting to death the third son, in the 750th year of Rome. For forty days before his death he was at Jericho and the baths of Calirrhoe, hence the events mentioned in this section must have occurred before that time. He was the first ruler of the Jews who did not acknowledge the rights of the Messiah. The Asmonean princes all did. Before the death of him who had been foisted on the throne by Roman enactment, one was 'born King of the Jews,' in accordance with Gen. 49: 10.

Wise men, Gr. 'Magi,' sages. Originally a class of priests among the Persians and Medes, who formed the king's privy council, and cultivated astrology, medicine, and occult natural science. They are frequently referred to by ancient authors. Herodotus speaks of them as a priestly caste of the Medes, and as interpreters of dreams. Afterwards the term was applied to all Eastern philosophers; and there were many in more Western countries who made astrology and the like their trade; for example, Simon Magus and Elymas the socerer. Hence the term 'magician' has a bad meaning, not implied in the word 'magi,' from which it is derived. The tradition that the Magi were three kings (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar) appears to have arisen from the number of their gifts, and from the prophecy in Is. 60: 3. The earlier fathers speak of them as twelve and even fifteen in number. They are justly regarded as the first fruits and representatives of heathen converts to Christianity. Hence the festival of Epiphany (Jan. 6), also called 'the three kings,' celebrating Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles, though originally instituted for a wider purpose, was very early associated with this visit of the Magi, and celebrated as a missionary festival. The date of the visit was probably more than twelve days after the birth of Jesus.—**From the east.** Either: they came from the East, or: their home was in the East. The latter is the more probable meaning, and would imply the former. 'The East' may refer to Arabia, Persia, Chaldaea, or more remote countries. In all these astrologers were found, and in all there was an expectation of some great deliverer to come about this time, derived, as is supposed, from the prophecy, Dan. 14: 24. Comp. the Star of Jacob in Balaam's prophecy, Numb. 24: 17. Persia or Mesopotamia was probably their residence. The way was doubtless long; but they found Christ, while those nearer Him had not even looked for Him. The hope of a Saviour was given to the Jews as a *chosen race*, but the same hope was given to *chosen individuals* among the Gentiles. Comp. the many instances in Old Testament history.—**To Jerusalem.** At the capital they looked for the King, or for tidings of him. For a description of the city, see map and Bible-dictionaries.

that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in

Ver. 2. **Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** Confidence is implied in the question. The word 'born' is emphatic; the one sought was not only newly born, but a born king, not one placed on the throne by accident. The question involves a deeper meaning than the Magi designed. A born King of the Jews is the hope of the Gentiles also, according to the promise now so widely fulfilled.—**For we saw.** They probably had not seen it all along their journey, certainly not while in Jerusalem.—**His star.** The event was worthy of such a display of power. Explanations: (1) A meteor or a comet. Improbable. (2) A miraculous star appearing for their guidance, and then disappearing (seen by them only, as some think). (3) A remarkable conjunction of the heavenly bodies, viz., of the planets Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and an extraordinary star. First proposed by the devout astronomer Kepler. Jupiter and Saturn were conjoined B. C. 7, or in the year of Rome 747, and seen twice (May 20 and Oct. 27); Mars was added in the following spring. In 1604 Kepler observed a fourth star of unusual brilliancy, 'like the most beautiful and glorious torch.' It is supposed that this occurred at the birth of Christ also. Kepler's astronomical calculations on this subject have been strikingly verified at the Greenwich Observatory. Abarbanel, a Jew of the fifteenth century, speaks of the same conjunction as occurring before the birth of Moses, and found in its recurrence in his day (A. D. 1463) a sign of the speedy coming of the Messiah. Astrologers would attach more importance to such a conjunction than to the appearance of a new star, hence the phenomenon must have been noticed by the Magi. The Greek word used (*ἀστήρ*, not *ἀστρον*), however, points to a single star, and the date is two years earlier (B. C. 7) than that in which Christ is generally supposed to have been born. But these difficulties are not insuperable. (4) The expectations of the Magi were aroused by the remarkable conjunction, and their watching was rewarded by the sight of the miraculous star. This is, perhaps, the best theory. It recognizes the astronomical fact, and teaches even more fully the lesson that the *expectant* study of nature leads to the discovery of the supernatural. Equally with the last view it shows us the Magi, because earnestly seeking the Messiah, led to Him by nature, by science, if astrology can be so termed. God can use the imperfect researches of men, and blesses investigations which fail of obtaining the whole truth; otherwise modern science would be unblessed no less than astrology. Astrology did not, at all events, prevent them from recognizing 'His Star.' Among ancient nations there was a general belief, that strange phenomena in the sky betokened important events, especially the birth of great men. A sign in heaven will precede the second coming of Christ (chap. 22: 30).—**In the east.** Seen by them in Eastern countries, or seen in the eastern sky. The first was certainly the fact; but the second is the probable meaning here. Some explain it as meaning: 'at its rising;' but this is hardly borne

3 the east, and are come to worship him. And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written ¹by the prophet,

6 And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a governor,
Which shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

¹ Or, *through*.

out by the language.—**And are come to worship him.** No doubt in the sense of religious adoration. Gentiles would hardly travel so far merely to render the homage usually accorded to earthly kings.

Ver. 3. **Herod the king**; the reigning king.—**Was troubled**, fearing for his throne, as might be expected from his jealous disposition.—**And all Jerusalem with him.** Either: at the same time with him, or: because of him, knowing his cruelty. Many may have dreaded the Advent of the Messiah, either from stings of conscience or from dread of the troublous times which were expected to attend His coming. If the tyrant trembles, all his surroundings tremble with him. Unbelievers, in times of danger, are often the most superstitious. Those who do not believe in God, believe in ghosts or idols.

Ver. 4. **All the chief priests.** Probably not a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, since to this belonged the 'elders' also, who are not mentioned here. Literally: 'high priests.' It includes, besides the one actual high-priest, those who had held the office (for the Romans often transferred it, contrary to the Jewish law), and, perhaps, the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests.—**Scribes of the people.** The successors of Ezra, the official copyists of the Scriptures, who naturally became its expounders. These two classes were the proper ones to answer Herod's question.—**Where the Christ should be born.** An acknowledgment that the Messiah had been promised by God. Herod's subsequent cruelty was a defiance of God. The scribes knew the letter, but not the spirit of the Scripture. The Magi, with less knowledge, but more faith, were nearer the truth. The indifference of the former was hostility in the germ.

Ver. 5. **For.** They speak of the prophetic declaration as decisive.—**It is written.** It has been written, and still remains on record.—**By** (*literally, through*) **the prophet** (Micah 5: 1, 2). As the prophecy was well known, the name is not given.

Ver. 6. **And thou Bethlehem.** Freely quoted from the Greek version (the Septuagint) then in common use. The Hebrew is literally:

7 Then Herod privily called the ¹wise men, and learned
 8 of them carefully ²what time the star appeared. And
 he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search
 out carefully concerning the young child; and when
 ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may
 9 come and worship him. And they, having heard the
 king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw
 in the east, went before them, till it came and stood

¹ Gr. *Magi*. Compare Esther 1 : 13; Dan. 2 : 12. ² Or, *the time of the star that appeared*.

'But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, too small to be among the thousands of Judah [*i. e.*, the towns where the heads of thousands resided, the chief towns of the subdivisions of the tribes]: out of thee shall come forth unto me one who is to be ruler in Israel.' The variations are undoubtedly intentional and explanatory. It is not evident whether the passage was quoted by the scribes, or inserted as an explanation by Matthew. Instead of Ephratah, we find 'the land of Judah,' and instead of 'too small to be among,' we have 'art not the least,' which is a sort of question introducing the insignificance of the place, and implying its moral greatness as the birth-place of the Messiah. Bethlehem was not among the chief towns of Judah in the list given, Josh. 15 : 59.—**Princes** is, according to a usual figure, put for the towns where the princes, or heads of thousands, lived.—**For** gives the reason for the greatness in spite of the insignificance.—**Who shall be shepherd**. This includes both ruling and feeding; the meaning is: shall be a careful and affectionate ruler.

Ver. 7. **Privately**. This indicates his evil purpose, and is quite characteristic of political suspicion.—**Learned of them carefully**, or 'exactly.' He probably drew some inference from what they told him, and took measures accordingly.—**What time**. This implies how long it had appeared, quite as much as, when it appeared.

Ver. 8. Contains his deceitful command. It was a lie diplomatic, based on the truth, for he sent them to Bethlehem

Ver. 9. **They went their way**. The interview seems to have taken place in the evening, and they set out immediately afterwards; but night-travelling is customary in the East.—**Lo, the star**, etc. The theory of a miraculous star easily explains the statement of this verse, and if we were told that the star stood over the *house*, then no other explanation will suffice. The expression, **where the young child was**, may, however, refer to Bethlehem. The astronomical theory thus explains the passage: The most remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn took place in May, and would be visible before sunrise (*i. e.*, in the East), five months afterwards, a sufficient time to perform the journey; another conjunction took place which would be visible near the meridian shortly after sunset. If then they set out in

10 over where the young child was. And when they saw
 11 the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto

the early night, this phenomenon would be apparent in the direction of Bethlehem. Being near the zenith, it would seem to go before them on their way. Supposing, then, the standing of the star to mean its reaching its zenith, there would be about sufficient time to reach Bethlehem, for the calculations show that the planets were at the zenith one and a half hours after sunset. The time of year, according to this view, was December 5. On the calculations of Kepler and recent astronomers, see Schaff, *Church Hist.*, revised ed. (1882), I., p. 113 ff.

Ver. 10. **When they saw the star.** This shows that for some time, at least, they had not seen it.—**They rejoiced with exceeding great joy.** Literally, 'rejoiced a great joy exceedingly.' The re-appearance of the star indicated to them their success and the truth of their calculations. The joy, however, was not at the standing of the star, but at its appearing again, hence miraculous guidance is not necessarily implied.

Ver. 11. **The house.** Probably not the place where Jesus was born, but temporary lodgings, in which they remained until 'the forty days of purification' were accomplished. If the event falls within that period, it would be easy to find the house, since the story told by the shepherds would not be so soon forgotten in a little place like Bethlehem.—**With Mary, his mother,** not 'Mary with her child' (as the later Mariolatry would have it). The same order occurs in vers. 13, 14, 20, 21. Joseph seems to have been absent.—**And they fell down and worshipped him,** and Him alone. The worship was more than the usual reverence to kings, or the journey of the Magi would seem unaccountable (comp. ver. 2).—**Opening their treasures.** The bags or boxes containing their treasures.—**Gifts** to a superior sovereign were usual in the East.—**Gold.** Offered chiefly to kings and gods.—**Frankincense.** A resinous transparent gum of bitter taste and fragrant odor, used in sacrifices and temple worship, distilled from a tree in Arabia and India.—**Myrrh.** An aromatic gum, produced from a thorn-bush, indigenous in Arabia and Ethiopia, but growing also in Palestine, used for fumigation, and for improving the taste of wine, but especially as an ingredient of a very precious ointment. The Greek word is *smyrna*. These gifts were costly, but give no clue to the home of the Magi, nor do they indicate their number or rank. The patristic interpretation of the gold—kingly power; the incense—divinity of Christ; the myrrh—death and embalmment—is ingenious, but not historical.

The holy family were thus providentially supplied with means for

12 gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

CHAPTER 2: 13-23.

The Flight into Egypt.

13 Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise

the journey to Egypt, and for the purification of Mary. Strangers from a distance must be the instruments of providing for the born King of the Jews; the promised Messiah supported in His poverty by heathen. Offering to the Lord what we have; He knows how to put it to the very best use. These heathen show how the sight of Christ not only leads earnest hearts to worship, but willing hands to give.

Ver. 12. **Being warned of God.** Probably they had asked guidance, because they suspected Herod's double dealing. They obtained guidance in a dream, or by dreams.—**They departed**, or 'withdrew.'—**By another way.** Avoiding Jerusalem, to which they would naturally have returned, wherever their own country might have been.—**Their own country.** Still indefinite.

The brief story of this episode thus ends. Superstition has founded legends upon it; faith finds many lessons in it. Heaven and earth move, as it were, about the holy child as their centre; He is so remote, so hidden, so disowned, yet near, discovered and acknowledged by those who seek Him; their search is helped not only by Scripture, but by nature and the most imperfect science; the awakening faith of the Gentiles and the slumbering unbelief of the Jews. The star of Bethlehem is a beautiful symbol of the nobler aspirations of heathenism and of every human soul toward the incarnate God, to whom it points and over whom it abides. The Magi, like Melchizedek and Job, open to us a vista of hope respecting the salvation of many who live outside the visible church and removed from the ordinary means of grace.

The Flight into Egypt, vers. 13-23.

CHRONOLOGY. We place the flight into Egypt *after* the presentation in the temple (Luke 2: 22-39). The latter took place on the fortieth day, and the interval which this allows is too brief for the events of this section. On the relative position of the Adoration of the Magi and the presentation, see Luke 2: 22-39. On the childhood of Jesus, see Luke 2: 40-52.

CONTENTS. Peculiar to Matthew, who follows the thread of the history, rather to discover proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus than to present a full and chronological narrative of events. In this section the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy is asserted in accordance with this design. The flight into Egypt. Herod, failing to discover the Messiah by craft, seeks to destroy Him by cruelty. The return to Judæa and the residence in Galilee. Herod, the king of the Jews through Roman favor, rep-

and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod
 14 will seek the young child to destroy him. And he
 arose and took the young child and his mother by
 15 night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until
 the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which
 was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

represents the fruitless hostility of Jew and Gentile to the Christ of God. Egypt and Galilee protect Him whom Jerusalem persecutes. Flight and persecution follow the angelic anthem and the adoration of the Magi. Egypt the cradle of God's people, in both dispensations. — 'Jesus has sanctified even the afflictions of our childhood' (Starke). — Nazareth a symbol of the humiliation of Christ and the humble condition of His people.

Ver. 13. The Magi may have communicated their suspicions or revelation (ver. 12) to **Joseph**, to whom as the head of the family the present revelation is made, **in a dream, again.**—**Egypt**, 'as near, as a Roman province and independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews, was an easy and convenient refuge' (Alford). In Alexandria, its chief city, the Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and there the Jewish and Greek religions and systems of thought were brought into contact, resulting in the philosophy of Philo and his followers.—**Until I tell thee**, or, say to thee (what thou shalt do).—**Will seek**, more exactly, 'is about to seek.'

Ver. 14. **And he arose.** Implying immediate obedience; characteristic of genuine faith.—**By night**, i. e., the same night.—**Departed**, or, 'withdrew,' the same word which was used respecting the Magi.

Ver. 15. **The prophet.** Hosea (11: 1). A typical prophecy referring first to the children of Israel, then in a higher sense to Christ. Alford: 'It seems to have been a settled axiom of interpretation (which has, by its adoption in the New Testament, received the sanction of the Holy Ghost Himself, and now stands for our guidance), that the subject of all allusions, the represented in all parables and dark sayings, was He who was to come, or the circumstances attendant on His advent or reign.'—The place of Egypt in history should not be forgotten. Thence came the children of Israel and He whom they typified: but thence, too, ancient civilization and the influence which prepared the way for the spread of the gospel. God did not forsake the Gentile world, though it forsook Him, and as Israel and Christ went to Egypt and did not originate there, so the civilizing influences which proceeded thence, were sent there of God, and not purely of Egyptian origin.—The place of sojourn is unknown, though tradition points to a village called Metariyeh, not far from the city of Heliopolis (On), and near the site of the temple erected in Egypt for the Jews

- 16 Out of Egypt did I call my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the ¹wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had carefully learned of the ¹wise

¹ Or, *Magi*.

under the priesthood of Onias. The Tree of the Virgin and the Fountain of the Virgin embody the tradition.

Ver. 16. The beginning of the persecutions which culminated in the crucifixion.—**Then Herod when he saw that he was mocked**, or, ‘trifled with,’ i. e., duped, according to his view of the case, **by the Magi, was exceeding wroth**. The murderer of his own favorite wife (Mariamne) and two sons (Alexander and Aristobulus) would easily murder, in his anger, some twenty or more unknown infants in a country town. The Emperor Augustus made a Greek witticism on the cruelty of Herod to his sons (it is better to be “Herod’s swine than son”), and Josephus records that he ordered a number of the chief men to be put to death as soon as he expired, that there might be no rejoicing at his own decease. Josephus, however, does not mention the massacre at Bethlehem. It may have been unknown to him, who wrote ninety years afterwards, since the sending forth may have been in secret, as was the questioning of the Magi (ver. 7), or unnoticed among the many horrible crimes of Herod; while it would impress itself upon the local memory from which the gospel record was derived. ‘Such incidents as the journey into Egypt and the massacre of the children, must have been well-ascertained facts before any one would think of finding a prophetic announcement of them in the words of Hosea and Jeremiah, which the author quotes and applies to them’ (Godet).—**Male children**, as the Greek implies. This reduces the number, and enhances the credibility.—**In all its borders**. The neighborhood was included that there might be no escape, just as the age, **two years**, was the extreme limit within which the child could have been born, **according to the time**, or period, **which he had exactly learned of the Magi**. As children under the age of two years were slain, it is probable that the star had not appeared so long a time before the visit of the Magi. Cruelty here overran the limits of space and time alike. These infant martyrs (martyrs in fact, though not in will) were much celebrated in the ancient church, especially on the feast of Innocents (December 28). They lead the innumerable army of saved infants in heaven. Half of the human race die in infancy. This may be one of God’s methods of saving the greatest number. Heaven will clear up all the mysteries of earth.

- 17 men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken ¹by
Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
18 A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children ;
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.
19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the
Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying,
20 Arise and take the young child and his mother, and

¹ through.

Ver. 17. **Jeremiah, the prophet** (32: 15). Free quotation (from the Septuagint) of a typical prophecy. Not: 'that it might be fulfilled,' but simply: 'was fulfilled.'

Ver. 18. **In Ramah**, etc. The passage refers primarily to the leading of the Israelites captive to Babylon. Rachel, the ancestress of Benjamin, buried near Bethlehem, is represented as issuing from the grave and lamenting, thus indicating extreme calamity. The sound of her lamentations is carried beyond Jerusalem, and heard at Ramah (the name probably means 'high'), a fortress of Israel on the frontier toward Judah, where the captives were collected. The figure becomes a typical prophecy of the grief in Bethlehem. Rachel was the ancestress of the tribe of Benjamin, which was always identified in fortune with Judah. She well represents the mothers of Bethlehem, near to which she died in child-birth and was buried. Her tomb, on the site of which there is now a mosque, lies about half a mile north of Bethlehem on the road to Jerusalem. Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans alike revere the spot, which is much frequented by pilgrims. 'The wail of Rachel is renewed in the Church as often as the witnesses to the truth are put to death by carnal and worldly men, who profess to be the representatives of the Church.' (Lange.)

Ver. 19. **When Herod was dead**. Herod died at Jericho just before the Passover (April) in the year 750 after the building of Rome, four years before the date from which we reckon our time. The common Christian era was not fixed until five hundred years later. The length of the stay in Egypt has, however, been variously reckoned from a few weeks to three years in accordance with the various dates assigned to the Nativity. The Evangelist makes no comment on Herod's character; he adds no expletive. He can learn little who will not of himself make proper inferences. Josephus describes the horrible death of Herod, amid alternate designs of revenge and fits of despair.

Ver. 20. **They are dead**. A similar expression is used (Ex. 4: 19) in a revelation made to Moses, with which Joseph was certainly acquainted.

go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that
 21 sought the young child's life. And he arose and took
 the young child and his mother, and came into the
 22 land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus
 was reigning over Judæa in the room of his father
 Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned
 of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Gali-
 23 lee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth:

Ver. 21. **The land of Israel** included Galilee; but Judæa would be reached first on the return.

Ver. 22. **Archelaus.** Four sons of Herod (the Great) are mentioned in the New Testament. He had ten wives and fourteen children. (1) *Herod Antipas*, the murderer of John the Baptist (frequently mentioned in the Gospels and Acts 4: 27; 13: 1), and (2) *Archelaus*, were sons of Malthace, the fourth wife of Herod; (3) *Herod Philip I.* ('Philip,' Mark 6: 17) was the son of Mariamne, the third wife, and lived a private life, having been excluded from all share in his father's possessions; (4) *Herod Philip II.* ('Philip the tetrarch,' Luke 3: 1) was the son of Cleopatra, the fifth wife of Herod, and the husband of Salome, the daughter of Herodias (Matt. 14: 6; Mark 6: 22), and his half-brother Philip.—The name, 'Archelaus,' means 'ruler of the people.' Herod excluded Archelaus by will from any share in his dominions, but afterward bequeathed him 'the kingdom.' The Emperor Augustus allowed him to be 'Ethnarch,' over Judæa, Idumæa, and Samaria. He was actually reigning at the time referred to in this verse. He was afterward summoned to Rome, and banished into Gaul. Herod Agrippa I. ('Herod the King,' Acts 12: 1, etc.) and Herod Agrippa II. ('King Agrippa,' Acts 25, 26), his son, were descendants of Aristobulus, the murdered son of Herod the Great.—**Was afraid to go thither.** Hearing this, probably, on the way, he turned aside before reaching Judæa. The word 'go' strictly means 'go away,' as if he would naturally have gone somewhere else, *i. e.*, to Nazareth his home.—**Warned**, even more than in ver. 12, implies a previous inquiry.—**Withdrew**, as in vers. 12, 14.—**The parts of Galilee**, *i. e.*, the country itself, the northernmost province of Palestine. The name is derived from a word signifying a ring or circle. The Galileans, though Jews in religion, were despised by inhabitants of Judæa (Jews in the strict sense), probably because provincials, and living more closely allied with the heathen. Samaria lay between Judæa and Galilee.

Ver. 23. It does not follow that Matthew was not aware of the previous residence of Joseph in Nazareth. There is no contradiction between his statements and those of Luke. Each mentions those facts most important for his special purpose. Matthew's narrative is not a biography, but brings up facts to prove the fulfilment of prophecy.

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ¹by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

¹ Or. *through*.

He reserves the mention of Nazareth until he can say: 'that it might be fulfilled,' etc. Nor was it strange that Joseph, though previously a resident of Galilee, should at first seek to return to Judæa. The revelations made to him would suggest Bethlehem as the proper place to train this 'child.' 'He naturally supposed that He who was of the tribe of Judah should dwell in the land of Judah, the most religious, most sacred part of Palestine; and, as the promised Messiah, should be brought as near as possible to the theocratic centre, where He might have frequent intercourse with the priests and rabbins, and be educated under the very shadow of the temple. Only through a special command of God, was he led to return with Jesus to Galilee; and that he made his abode in the obscure vale of Nazareth, can only be explained by the fact, of which Matthew is wholly silent, that this had been his earlier residence, as related by Luke' (Andrews). All difficulties are met, if we suppose that when Joseph and Mary left Nazareth at the time of the census, they intended to settle at Bethlehem, which they would regard as the most suitable place of residence for the expected child, the infant Messiah.—**A city called Nazareth.** Implying the comparative obscurity of the place. 'The name *Nazareth* seems to be an Aramaic form of a Hebrew word (*nezer*), meaning a shoot or twig, and applied by Isaiah (11: 1) to the Messiah as a shoot from the prostrate trunk or stem of Jesse, *i. e.*, to his birth from the royal family of Judah in its humble and reduced estate. This coincidence of name, as well as the obscurity of Nazareth itself and the general contempt for Galilee at large, established an association between our Lord's humiliation and his residence at this place, so that various predictions of his low condition were fulfilled in being called a Nazarene.' (J. A. Alexander.) The village of Nazareth is charmingly nestled between hills about five hundred feet above the great plain of Esdraelon, near the historic spots connected with Samuel, Saul, David, and Jonathan, and Elijah, with a rich outlook (from the top of the hill) to Lebanon, Tabor, Mt. Carmel, and the Mediterranean sea. It perpetuates the memory of Christ's childhood by the Fountain of the Virgin, and some incredible traditions, and is still, like Bethlehem, remarkable for the exceptional beauty of its women. (See Schaff, *Bible Lands*, p. 320.)—**That it might be fulfilled.** God so willed it, irrespective of Joseph's design of settling there.—**Prophets.** Indefinite, because what follows is a summing up of the sense of a number of prophetic allusions (Isa. 11: 1; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 15; Zech. 3: 8; 6: 12).—**That he should be called a Nazarene.** He was thus called, as an inhabitant of Nazareth (comp. Acts 24: 6: 'sect of the Nazarenes'); but no prophet uses these words or applies this name to the Messiah. It cannot be a quotation from a lost or apocryphal book, nor is the

CHAPTER 3: 1-12.

The Preaching of John the Baptist.

3: 1 AND in those days cometh John the Baptist,

term identical with 'Nazarite;' for the two words are spelled differently both in Greek and Hebrew. 'The various allusions to the despised and humble appearance of the Messiah are, so to speak, concentrated in that of *Nezer*. The prophets applied to Him the term *branch* or *bush*, in reference to His insignificance in the eyes of the world; and this appellation was specially verified, when He appeared as an inhabitant of despised Nazareth, "the town of shrubs."—(Lange.)

The Preaching of John the Baptist, vers. 1-12.

CONTENTS. John the Baptist, his mission, character, and preaching. The section takes up the Old Testament prophecy (ver. 3), and concludes with an announcement of the coming Messiah (vers. 11, 12), whose baptism is next recorded. John combines the characters of Moses and Isaiah, joins law and promise in his preaching; the last of the Old Covenant, and nearest to the New; the greatest born of women, and yet inferior in position to the least in Christ's kingdom (comp. chap. 11: 1). He decreases that Christ may increase (John 3: 30); preaches the law (repentance), because the gospel is at hand (ver. 2); stern in rebuke of sinners (ver. 7), he is poor in spirit before the Saviour (ver. 11). A herald of the kingdom (ver. 2), yet not of it (chap. 11: 11), he came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1: 17; comp. Matt. 11: 14), to be the connecting link between the Old and New Dispensations. His doubts about the mission of Christ (chap. 11: 3) recall the impatience of Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 19). Yet his baptism had a greater significance than the Mosaic ritual washings, and his preaching was an advance on all previous teaching. The former culminated in the baptism of Christ (vers. 15-17), the latter in the announcement: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1: 29). Josephus, who ignores Christ from policy (for the passage Arch. XVIII. 3, 3 is probably an interpolation) very favorably mentions John the Baptist, and describes him as a preacher of repentance (Arch. XVIII. 5, 2).

Ver. 1. In those days. Nearly thirty years after the events mentioned in the last chapter (comp. Luke 3: 23). Of that long period of private discipline and preparation in Nazareth, only one incident is preserved in the Gospels (Luke 2: 42-52). The Apocryphal histories 'of the Infancy' are as foolish as false. This silence of Scripture suggests lessons of obedience and reverence to parents, of patience and perseverance in the long process of education for our life-work.—**Cometh**, makes his appearance as a public personage; probably at the Levitical age of thirty years, as in the case of our Lord (Luke 3: 23). This chapter is then the history of six months.—**John**, Hebrew: *Johanan* (the Lord graciously gave), allied to the Phœnician name *Hannibal* (German, *Gottlieb*). On the remarkable circumstances at-

2 preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent
3 ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this

tending his birth and naming, see Luke 1. He was related to the holy family through his mother (Luke 1: 36).—**The Baptist**, well known as such. This title is transferred from the Greek. Mark (6: 14, 24) twice calls him 'the Baptizer' ('he who baptized'). Baptism was a prominent and distinctive rite in his ministry.—**Preaching**. Proclaiming, or publishing, as a herald does; so throughout the New Testament. Not so much the act of formal religious instruction, as the announcing facts, the heralding a person. Preaching should still be thus distinguished from lecturing, catechizing, etc. John was emphatically a herald (comp. vers. 2, 3), and in the truest sense a prophet.—**In the wilderness**, i. e., a region 'not regularly cultivated and inhabited, but used for pasturage, being generally without wood, and deficient in water, but not entirely destitute of vegetation.' This wilderness was a rocky tract in the eastern part of Judæa, toward the Dead Sea. This appearance in the wilderness was not only a fulfilment of prophecy, but characteristic of the mission of John, and symbolical of the isolation of the Jews under the old covenant.

Ver. 2. Repent. Not mere remorse, but conversion and reformation, or turning away from sin and unto God. The Greek word means change of mind or heart. A necessary exhortation, because the people were corrupt, but especially now: **for the kingdom of heaven** (Gr. 'heavens') **is at hand**, i. e., has become and is now near in time. 'The kingdom of heaven' is equivalent to 'the kingdom of God,' and is used by this Evangelist alone (about thirty times). It is in the world, but not of the world, heavenly in its origin, character, and destination. It is the kingdom from heaven, for the Messiah, the King, came from heaven. In Dan. 7: 13 the Kingdom of the Messiah ('one like the Son of man') is contrasted with the worldly empires. The Jews, however, thought it was to be a temporal kingdom. Hence they rejected an humble Saviour, and yet used this view against Him before Pilate (Luke 23: 2; John 19: 12). From this Jewish error the Apostles were not entirely freed until the day of Pentecost. It does not refer exclusively to a kingdom still future, but to the reign of the Messiah both in its inception (at the Advent) and its consummation (at the future 'coming'). The former is the prominent thought here, in other cases, the latter. In the widest sense, it includes the Old Testament theocracy as a preparation, and what is usually meant by the invisible Church or the communion of all the children of God throughout the world. Matthew's exclusive use of 'heaven' is probably in contrast with the external (and worldly) Jewish notions.

Ver. 3. For. He thus preached, because he was sent to fulfil this prophecy.—**Is he.** All the Evangelists and John himself thus apply the prophecy, which is more than a typical one. Even if the primary reference was to a return from captivity, the entire fulfilment was in the mission of the Baptist.—**Isaiah**, 40: 3. Here, as in Mark 1: 3;

is he that was spoken of ¹by Isaiah the prophet, saying,
 The voice of one crying in the wilderness,
 Make ye ready the way of the Lord,
 Make his paths straight.

4 Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair,
 and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food

¹ Or, *through*.

Luke 3: 4, the Evangelist quotes; in John 1: 23, the Baptist applies the prophecy to himself.—**The voice.** From the Septuagint. Literally 'a voice.' Some suppose John is represented as a 'voice,' in contrast with Christ as 'the Word;' others, because his life was vocal, 'the whole man being as it were a sermon,' perhaps with reference to the long silence since the prophet Malachi.—**In the wilderness** is connected, in the Hebrew, with 'prepare,' here with 'crying.' The sense remains the same. 'The wilderness' refers to the spiritually desolate condition of God's people.—**The way of the Lord**, i. e., Jehovah. By implication the coming One was Jehovah. An allusion to the Eastern custom of removing obstacles before the approach of a royal personage. Hence the prophecy did not primarily refer to the return of the Jews from captivity, when no King was present.

Ver. 4. **Now John himself.** The dress and habits of John confirm the statement of ver. 3. His dress corresponded with his preaching. The resemblance to Elijah was possibly in the mind of the Evangelist, since our Lord, in His public teaching (chap. 11: 14; 17: 12, 13), referred the prophecy of Malachi (respecting Elijah) to John.—**Camel's hair.** The coarse cloth woven of the hair shed each year. The fine cloth called camlet is made of the softer hairs. Zech. 14: 3 suggests that this was the distinctive dress of the Old Testament prophets; but this is not certain. Elijah was thus distinguished (comp. 2 Kings 1: 8).—**A leathern girdle**, such as Elijah wore, of undressed hide. The austere dress befitted the austere preacher of repentance, whose ministry, like that of Elijah, aimed at bringing back the people to the spirit of their fathers (see vers. 8, 9).—**Locusts** are still eaten in the East by the poorest class, and were allowed to be eaten by the Mosaic law (Lev. 11: 22). The older expositors, not aware that locusts were eaten, give conjectural explanations: shrimps, cakes, etc.—**Wild honey.** Abundant in Palestine, which is described as 'flowing with milk and honey.' The term is, however, used by other ancient authors, of a kind of honey which issued from fig trees, palms, and other trees. A still more meagre diet.—Thus John came 'neither eating nor drinking,'—a Nazarite. He probably did not enjoin this mode of life upon others. His position demanded it of him, and his actual self-denial had a symbolical meaning, pointing to the repentance he preached. John was the forerunner of Christ; repentance precedes the assurance of salvation in our consciousness;

5 was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the

but the coming of salvation is the great motive to repentance: 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Ver. 5. **To him**, *i. e.*, to the banks of the Jordan.—**Jerusalem**. The inhabitants of the capital city are first referred to.—**All Judæa**, the multitude was great enough to justify this expression.—**Round about (the) Jordan**. An indefinite expression, which may include parts of Samaria and Galilee; but the most remote locality seems to have been put first, and the nearest last. Continued action is here asserted. John's spiritual power was so great, that it became quite the fashion, even among the self-righteous Jews, to go out into the wilderness to be baptized.

Ver. 6. **And they were baptized of (by) him**. 'They' is to be supplied, since verse 5 speaks of the regions. Baptism was essentially a symbolical or ceremonial washing, prescribed at first by the Mosaic law, as a sign of moral purification and renovation, joined with sacrifice. It was ordered for the consecration of the priests (Ex. 29: 4; Lev. 8: 6), and for the purification of the leper and other unclean persons (Lev. 14: 8; 15: 31, 32). It was used for the admission of proselytes from heathenism, male and female. It was expected as one of the signs of the coming of the Messiah (John 1: 25; comp. Isa. 1: 16; Ez. 36: 25; Zech. 13: 1). John's baptism was intended for all, Jews as well as Gentiles. Christ Himself was the subject of the rite, as a Jew (see next section). But it was only preparatory, like his whole mission, and hence not identical with Christian baptism. Those who had received John's baptism were re-baptized (Acts 19: 4); it had a more profound significance than the ceremonial lustration, yet it was not a baptism 'unto Christ's death' (Rom. 6: 3), but 'unto repentance' (comp. ver. 11).—Details of external form are not made prominent in the religion of Christ, and the mode practised by John, cannot conclusively determine the proper mode of Christian baptism. The indications are clearly that the subjects were immersed by John, and commonly in a stream (comp. ch. 3: 11 the phrase '*in water*,' and Mark 1: 10 '*coming out of the water*'). Immersion (thrice repeated) is still the only mode in all the Oriental (and Orthodox Russian) churches, and continued to prevail as a rule in the West down to the thirteenth century, though other modes, by affusion or sprinkling, were also used in the case of infants and sick persons. The Baptists still adhere to immersion as essential. The Greek word *baptize* is derived from a root that means 'to dip,' 'to immerse,' 'to submerge,' either literally or figuratively; but the term in Hellenistic Greek has a wider and more technical meaning of ceremonial purifications by the application of water; see 2 Kings 5: 14 (in the Septuagint, of Naaman); Mark 7: 4 ('except they bathe,' lit., 'baptize, themselves,'

7 river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism¹, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers,

¹ Against "to his baptism" add marg. Or, *for baptism*.—*Am. Com.*

where some ancient authorities read: 'sprinkle themselves;' in the same verse: 'washings,' lit., 'baptisms of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels and couches'); Heb. 6: 2 ('the teaching of baptisms'); 9: 10 ('divers washings,' lit., baptisms'). It is better in any case to retain the word 'baptize,' as marking more distinctly the technical sacramental sense.—**In the river Jordan.** This follows the better sustained reading. The traditional place of John's baptism, a few miles from Jericho, is still visited by thousands of Christian pilgrims on Easter Monday, who plunge into the sacred river as into a bath of regeneration. (See a description of these multitudinous baptisms in Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 300.)—**Confessing their sins.** This they did in every case, usually in a particular and public manner; yet the form probably varied. Some explain: 'on condition of confessing their sins;' but this is too strong.

Ver. 7. **But when he saw**—coming to his baptism. They came to be baptized ('for baptism' is the sense of a briefer reading), but John saw that they were not fit subjects. Luke represents John as speaking thus 'to the multitudes.' The coming of these leading people probably attracted a crowd to whom the language was equally applicable; or the Pharisees and Sadducees themselves formed 'the multitudes,' more closely defined by Matthew in accordance with the character of his Gospel.

The Pharisees and Sadducees. Two opposing parties, here classed together in the same unworthy category. They afterwards stood together against Christ. According to Josephus, both parties originated about the same time, B. C. 154-144.

The Pharisees were the upholders of strict orthodox Judaism, including the traditions of the elders. They had the greatest influence upon the people. The name probably means, *Separatists*, but implies, not a separation from the rest of the people, although this occurred to some extent, but their desire to separate the Jews from other nations. They represented one great form of religious error, that of outward legalism and traditionalism, hence of superstition, of self-righteousness, of hypocrisy, of lifeless orthodoxy,—a pernicious tendency that has continued under various forms. While our Lord lived on earth, they were His bitterest opponents. But from them also came Nicodemus, and Paul, the greatest of the Apostles.

The Sadducees (so named from their supposed founder, Zadok), represent the opposite tendency of worldliness, skepticism, rationalism, and unbelief. They rejected tradition, and probably even the later books of the Old Testament, denied the immortality of the soul, the existence of angels etc., and conformed greatly to heathen customs.

who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8 Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of ¹repentance: and

¹Or, *your repentance.*

They were the aristocratic party, and had generally possession of the high-priesthood under the Romans. They correspond to the liberal Jews of our days.

A third school existed, the Essenes. They are not mentioned in the Gospels, probably because they stood aloof and lived in monkish retirement around the Dead Sea. Their daily lustrations would lead them to attach little importance to the baptism of John. They may be called the Jewish mystics, and represent a tendency less universal than the other two schools. They stood no nearer to Christianity than the Pharisees and Sadducees, for they adopted both Jewish purifications, and Alexandrian philosophy.

Among the Greeks and Romans the Stoics correspond to the Pharisees, the Epicureans to the Sadducees, the Platonists to the mystical and ascetic Essenes. Out of Christ the majority of men belong to one of these schools or tendencies.

The two leading schools seem at first to have recognized John as a prophet, but his words soon aroused dislike. This grew into enmity when he announced Jesus as the Messiah, so that afterwards they tacitly denied his authority (comp. Luke 7: 30; Matt. 21: 25-27). The new teacher lost popularity when he rebuked sin and pointed to Christ.

Offspring (or, 'brood') **of vipers.** The phrase characterizes them as both deceitful and malicious. John probably alludes to the expression, 'seed of the serpent' (Gen. 3: 15); in spite of their descent from Abraham, he thus classes them with those over whom the seed of the woman should obtain the victory. This explanation takes away the apparent harshness, is in keeping with what follows, and appropriately applied by one who heralded the coming of Christ, to those who caused His death (thus bruising his heel).—**Who warned you?** Intimated to you, gave you a hint of. John expresses surprise that such as they could take the hint.—**To flee**, *i. e.*, to attempt to escape, as they were professing to do, or were actually doing. If the first be the sense, then John doubted their sincerity; if the latter, he would insist on thorough work.—**The wrath to come**, or, the coming, impending wrath of God, here identified with punishment itself. Foretold by Malachi (3: 2; 4: 5), in connection with the forerunner of the Messiah. Hence troublous times were anticipated. The fear of these times rather than of the future judgment moved the Pharisees and Sadducees, while John himself foretold the fate of the Jewish nation as part of the 'impending wrath.'

Ver. 8. **Bring forth therefore.** 'Therefore,' *i. e.*, if you are really fleeing as you profess to be, then bring forth fruit (the singular is found in the original) **worthy of repentance** (or, *your repentance*). The fruit or result, worthy of repentance, implies a good tree. The germ

9 think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
 10 And even now is the axe laid unto³ the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good
 11 fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you ⁴with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not ⁵worthy to bear: he shall baptize you ⁴with the

³ For "is the axe laid unto" read "the axe lieth at." So in Luke 3: 9.—*Am. Com.*

⁴ Or, in.

⁵ Gr, *sufficiet*.

of the great gospel truth: 'Ye must be born again,' since natural birth, or descent from Abraham (ver. 9), did not insure the worthy fruit.

Ver. 9. **Think not to say**, or, 'that you may say.' Do not say, nay, do not think that this is a plausible defence, even **within yourselves**, in your own hearts: **We have Abraham to (for) our father**, or, 'for a father,' *i. e.*, we shall escape, or be saved, because we are natural heirs to the promise made to him. This was the Jewish boast, the Jewish error; John's preaching went to the heart of the matter.—**For**. The reason the Jewish boast was not valid.—**God is able of** (or, 'out of') **these stones**, *i. e.*, lying loose on the banks of Jordan, where the words were uttered—sarcastic. No figurative reference to heathen or to monuments.—**To raise up children unto Abraham**. Very emphatic. God could create others to take their place as heirs of the promise. Probably a reference to the spiritual offspring of the patriarch (Rom. 4: 16; Gal. 3: 7). John, either consciously or unconsciously, predicts the calling of the Gentiles. Spiritual succession not dependent on natural or ecclesiastical (even 'apostolic') succession.

Ver. 10. **And even now**, while I am speaking.—**The axe lieth at the root of the trees**. The figure of verse 8 ('fruit') is carried out. The axe (Divine judgments) has not been applied as yet, but is ready for use, implying that 'the trees' were unfruitful, or of a bad kind. A striking declaration of imminent destruction.—**Therefore**, because of the position of the axe.—**Bringeth not forth good fruit**. There may be *blossoms*, professions, and yet no fruit, or the fruit may be *bad*.—**Is hewn down**. Not 'will be;' the present tense represents a certain and immediate future action, or a general law of the 'kingdom' which John heralded.—**Into the fire**, continued figure, setting forth the effect, God's wrath.

Ver. 11. **I indeed**. Contrast between himself and the One he heralded. He was not the judge: the Messiah would be.—**With** (literally, 'in') **water**. The person baptized stood in the water as the most convenient place (knee-deep or waist-deep, as represented in an-

12 Holy Ghost and *with* fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

cient pictures), and was either immersed, or the water was taken up and poured on his head. See note on ver. 6.—**Unto**, *i. e.*, with a view to **repentance**.—**He that cometh after me**, the Messiah; assuming His speedy appearance, and that the hearers also expected Him.—**Mightier**. In himself stronger and about to exert that strength.—**Whose shoes** (or, **sandals**) **I am not worthy to bear**. Sandals were fastened with a strap; comp. Mark 1: 7, where there is a reference to unloosing this strap, here to carrying the sandals away after being unloosed. To perform for the Messiah this menial office of the meanest slave, was too honorable for one to whom all Judea resorted. This unexampled humility was stronger evidence of true greatness than the power he exerted as a preacher. A fit forerunner of the 'meek and lowly' Messiah. Here the *official* superiority of Christ is spoken of, the superiority of *nature* is declared in the Gospel according to John, chap. 1.—**He shall baptize you**. Christ Himself did not baptize (John 4: 2). The contrast is between John's baptism unto repentance, and the spiritual power which Christ would give (not the Christian rite), for full and entire salvation. The second baptism is figurative; hence nothing is suggested for or against the identity of John's baptism and the Christian rite.—**The Holy Spirit**. The third person of the Trinity; not a contrast between external water and internal spirit.—**Fire**. 'With' is not to be supplied. Some refer this to the fire of judgment, as in ver. 12; but the close connection with what precedes, and the actual appearance of 'fire' on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 13), favor a reference to the powerful and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit (Is. 4: 4; Jer. 5: 14; Mal. 3: 2). 'In' must not be pressed in either case, since the Holy Spirit is represented as poured out, and the fire on the day of Pentecost came down upon the disciples.

Ver. 12. **Whose fan** ('winnowing-shovel'), etc. A new figure including a reference both to the saved and the lost; 'the axe' refers to the latter alone. The 'winnowing-shovel,' for separating the chaff and the wheat, was ready for use, **in his hand**, and thus equipped, **he will cleanse thoroughly** (from one end to the other) **his threshing-floor**. The threshing-floor was a circular space on the farm, either beaten hard or paved, where the grain was trodden out by oxen or horses. The threshing-floor of the Messiah becomes larger as the course of history moves on. The thorough cleansing of the floor itself will be completed when the end of the world comes, but the process of winnowing is included, *i. e.*, the disciplinary and punitive leadings of God with men.—**And he will gather**. The punctuation of the common version should be altered. The cleansing process is spoken

CHAPTER 3: 13-17.

The Baptism of Jesus; the Attestation of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto
 14 John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of

of first in general, then the twofold result is set forth in contrasted clauses.—**His wheat**, the fruits of the husbandry, the persons saved, hence 'His.'—**The garner**, the storehouse; either the kingdom of heaven on earth, or heaven itself, probably both, since Christ's salvation includes both words.—**The chaff**, the refuse, not 'His,' when separated will be burned up. As in the case of the 'wheat,' persons are meant, and the punishment may begin, like the blessing, in this world.—**Unquenchable fire**. The violent, uncontrollable blaze of a straw fire is the figurative representation of an awful reality. Once begun, the fiery judgment continues, until the unquenchable fire of Gehenna is kindled.

The Baptism of Jesus; the Attestation of the Father and the Holy Spirit, vers. 13-17.

CONTENTS. The culmination of the ministry of John in the baptism of Jesus. The accompanying attestation: to John, a revelation that this was the Christ; to Jesus His *Messianic inauguration*. It therefore marks an epoch in the Gospel history, and doubtless in the consciousness of the God-Man Himself (see notes on vers. 16, 17). While fulfilling all righteousness (ver. 15), the well-beloved Son receives witness from the Father (ver. 17), and is baptized with the Holy Spirit (ver. 16). A solemn introduction into His public ministry. The Baptism took place probably in the spring A. U. C. 780.

Ver. 13. **Then**. Probably about six months after John began to preach; comp. ver. 1.—**Cometh**, as in ver. 1, a coming forth into public view.—**From Galilee**, from His retired home in Nazareth, a long distance (about four days' journey).—**To be baptized of (by) him**. Jesus who was sinless, came to a baptism 'unto repentance.' This condescension formed a part of the obedience to the Divine law (see ver. 15), rendered by Him as a member of the Jewish nation. The Jews were baptized in token of uncleanness, so He, 'numbered with the transgressors,' must needs go through the rites and purifications prescribed for them. This act closes the concealed life of quiet subjection and legal submission and opens the public life of mediatorial satisfaction. Hence He was baptized, both to fulfil all righteousness and to receive the Divine attestation; certainly not merely to honor John.

Ver. 14. **But John would have hindered him** (tried to hinder Him). Peculiar to Matthew. Began to hinder Him, by act rather than word.—**I have need**, continuous, habitual need.—**Comest thou to me?** A question of surprise, implying a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, who had no sin and confessed no sin. John's

15 thee, and comest thou to me? But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer ¹*it* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffereth him.
 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened ²unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending

¹ Or, *me*.² Some ancient authorities omit *unto him*.

knowledge of Jesus, though not yet confirmed by Divine revelation, was sufficient to occasion the question. His subsequent declaration (John 1: 33): 'I knew Him not,' does not contradict this. Human knowledge is ignorance as compared with Divine certainty resting on revelation. He had not yet received the sign from heaven that would enable him by authority to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. Compare the very decided declarations made by the Baptist immediately afterwards.

Ver. 15. **Suffer it (or, *me*) now.** The propriety of John's scruples is recognized; a sinless Saviour does not need a baptism of repentance, but John was 'now' or 'as yet' the minister of the law, which Jesus must fulfil for our benefit. The relation between them would soon be changed; John would become the receiver, Christ the giver.—**It becometh us.** Both John in his office and Jesus in His.—**Righteousness.** The requirements of the law, regarded as including all that is right.—**Suffereth him.** More than 'he baptized him'; Jesus was really the active person, since the rite was administered at His command and by His authority.

Ver. 16. **From the water.** Mark: 'out of.' They probably stood waist-deep in the river, but as both accounts do not so assert, this is not the essential fact. The validity of baptism does not depend upon the quality and quantity of water, or the mode of its application, though immersion and emersion is the primitive and the most expressive mode to symbolize the idea of entire spiritual purification and renovation.—**And lo, the heavens were opened.** How, cannot be explained. Doubtless some miraculous appearance in the sky, invisible to the carnal eyes of the multitude, but visible to the spiritual eyes of Jesus and John. Heaven, which was closed to the first Adam, is opened again over the second, John 1: 51.—**Unto him, and he saw,** i. e., Jesus; though John also saw it (John 1: 33). The two statements point to a real appearance, seen by both the persons who were concerned in this solemn inauguration. 'Unto Him' may also mean 'for Him,' for his advantage. To Stephen also and to Paul were the heavens opened (Acts 7: 36; 9: 7; 22: 9; Apoc. 4: 1). In all these cases a *spiritual* real vision is meant.—**The Spirit of God.** Only a Person could be thus embodied.—**Descending as a dove.** Luke says, 'in a bodily form, as a dove.' This statement, in which all four Evangelists agree, is to be understood literally. A temporary embodiment of the Holy Spirit occurred to inaugurate our Lord as the Messiah.

17 as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, ³This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

* Or, *This is my Son; my beloved in whom I am well pleased.* See ch. 12: 18.

The accidental, or even Providential, appearance of a real dove would not call for such marked mention in all four Gospels. The dove symbolizes perfect gentleness, purity, fulness of life and the power of communicating it. The endowment with supernatural power and wisdom is connected with purity and simplicity. Christ commands His disciples to be as 'harmless as doves' (Matt. 10: 16).—**Coming upon him.** John (1: 32) says: 'it abode upon Him;' the outward sign was temporary, the anointing was permanent. His active ministry now begins in the fulness of the Spirit, which He received without measure (John 3: 34).

The baptism with the Holy Spirit of One 'conceived by the Holy Spirit,' is a Divine mystery. In one light it was but the outward sign of that which was His already. At the same time our Lord had a human development from one degree of holiness to another, rising higher and higher at every stage of life in proportion to its capacities. Comp. Luke 2: 40, 52; Heb. 5: 8. This event marked the age of maturity; the attainment of the full consciousness of his nature and mission as the God-Man and Saviour. The time had come for Him to begin His official work; the Divine Spirit now entered 'into some new relation with the Incarnate Son, with respect to the work of salvation, and the God-Man received some internal anointing for His work corresponding to the outward sign.'

Ver. 17. **And lo, a voice out of the heavens.** Heard by Jesus and John, as by the disciples on the mount of transfiguration (chap. 17: 5).—**This is.** A declaration to John that 'this is' the Messiah, and an attestation to the human consciousness of Jesus which was intensified in the conviction of His Divine Sonship. Comp. Ps. 2: 7. Matthew, who pays special attention to the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, probably gives the exact language: Mark and Luke give the substance: 'Thou art.'—**My beloved Son,** lit., 'My Son the beloved!' Used in a unique sense. No one else was or could be a 'Son,' or 'Beloved,' as this Person was. The Divine nature and eternal Sonship of Christ are obviously implied.—**In (with) whom.** This clause is taken from Is. 42: 1. See the direct quotation in chap. 12: 18.—**I am (Gr., was) well pleased.** The clause might be paraphrased: 'On whom I fixed my delight.' This means perfect complacency. The original indicates a past time, not a continued state. The latter sense is a possible one, declaring the eternal good pleasure of the Father in the Son, but this would be only a repetition of the previous declaration. The strict grammatical sense points to a definite act, to the complacency of the Father in the Son, when He assumed the office of Mediator (comp. Eph. 1: 4; John 17: 24; also Ps. 2: 7). Hence the reference is to the past, not to the time of his baptism. His

CHAPTER 4: 1-11.

The Temptation.

4: 1 THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, the pre-existence is implied, and the meaning is peculiarly appropriate in the circumstances. The Godhead eternally existing as Trinity was manifested, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to us and for us in this occurrence, as throughout the economy of redemption. The revelation of the Trinity at the baptism of Jesus gives special significance to the formula of baptism: 'into (*εἰς*) the name of the Father,' etc. By this attestation to his Sonship and Messiahship, Jesus was anointed as Prophet, Priest, and King. That such an occasion should involve miraculous events was to be expected. The supernatural becomes the natural in the life of a Divine human Person.

The Temptation, vers. 1-11.

CONTENTS. The three-fold temptation by Satan; the three-fold victory over Satan. The great decisive battle at the threshold of Christ's public life, preceded and followed by minor conflicts. He who came 'to destroy the works of the devil,' triumphs over him in personal conflict. He had first to bind the prince of darkness before He could enter his house and spoil his goods (12: 29). This was the Messiah's *trial* and *probation*, as His baptism had been His inauguration. The second Adam, like the first, was tempted by the enemy of the human race. Contrasts between the temptations: paradise, wilderness; fall, victory; disobedience and death, obedience and life.—The aim of Satan was to make of Jesus a *pseudo-Messiah*, abusing the Divine gifts for selfish ends by conforming to the carnal and worldly expectations of the Jews respecting the Messiah.—The three temptations: (1) to doubt the Word of God; (2) to presume upon the Word of God; (3) to reject the Word of God; or successive appeals to appetite, pride, ambition.—On the analogy between the three temptations and the three Jewish parties, and the three Messianic offices, see Lange, *Matthew*, p. 86. The temptation was communicated by Christ to His disciples. A mysterious, yet most real spiritual battle and victory, constantly repeated in the experience of saints.

Different views of the temptation:—

1. An external history, Satan appearing in person. Objections: 'It involves something supernatural.' But this might be expected in such circumstances. 'Verse 8 cannot be taken literally.' It may be in a qualified sense. The personality of Satan is implied; but this is no argument against this explanation. This is the view taken by nearly all the old and the majority of modern commentators.

2. An inner experience, a soul-struggle with Satan. The detailed accounts, full of references to localities and actions, might be thus explained. Neander, Ullmann, Keim, Plumptre. But it is necessary to admit the agency of a personal Tempter from without, and some external elements, and it is difficult to draw the line. Bengel, Lange, and others combine explanations (1) and (2).

3. A vision, like that of Peter (Acts 10), and of Paul (2 Cor. 12), in a state of ecstasy or suspension of the ordinary faculties. But it is difficult to account for the purely historical form of the accounts on this theory. There are no ecstatic visions or dreams reported in the life of Jesus.

4. A parable of Christ clothed in narrative-form. (Schleiermacher.)

2 derness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he afterward

5. A myth or religious poem, true in idea, but false in fact. (Strauss, De Wette.) But the whole history is diametrically opposed to the prevailing Jewish conception of the Messiah, and therefore cannot be derived from it as a mythical aftergrowth.

The last two theories are incompatible with the historical character of the Gospels.

Ver. 1. **Then**, immediately after the events mentioned in the last chapter, as Mark more explicitly states. After marked evidence of Divine favor, the most trying conflicts.—**Led up of (by) the Spirit**. Not by His own spirit, but by the Holy Spirit. The words 'led up' show this. A supernatural power seized him, and manned him for this mysterious conflict with the prince of darkness.—**Into the wilderness**. What wilderness, is a question of no special importance. Tradition points to a dreary and precipitous mountain near Jericho, west of the banks of the Jordan, called Quarantania, from the forty days' fast. This is the more probable locality; but our Lord, like Moses and Elijah, may have gone to the Sinaitic wilderness. Mark (1: 13) adds the graphic touch that Christ was 'with the wild beasts;' intensifying the horror of the scene.—**To be tempted**. For this purpose. To this contest, the God-man is impelled, not directly by His own will, but by the Spirit, to fulfil the design of the Father. According to His human nature, Jesus could be tempted, was in need of trial. Through this He passed without sin (Heb. 4: 15). There was 'a divine fitness' that the Saviour of sinners should be tempted as we are, that He might from personal experience sympathize with us and encourage us to flee to Him (Heb. 2: 18).—**Of (by) the devil**. The Greek word (*diabolos*) means slanderer, accuser. In the Old Testament he is called Satan, or adversary. A person, not a principle or influence, as is evident from the whole tenor of Scripture. The personal representatives of the two kingdoms here met. As Christ was in human form, it is natural to suppose the adversary took some bodily form. What form is not stated, nor is it material. The views which regard the temptation as purely internal do not require any bodily appearance. Some suppose that 'the tempter,' ver. 3, was a member of the Sanhedrin, presenting, as the special instrument of the devil, the prevalent false Messianic notions of the Jews. (The old rationalistic interpretation.) But 'the devil' is expressly mentioned in the second and third temptations; the suggestion of ver. 9 could not be made with any power by a Jew; ver. 10 speaks of Satan by name.—The best argument for the existence of a personal devil is the stubborn fact of many devils in human shape. Skeptics may deny the *one*; but they cannot get rid of the *many*. (Goethe: '*Den Bösen sind sie los, die Bösen sind geblieben.*')

Ver. 2. **Fasted**. Entire abstinence from food; comp. Luke 4: 2. —**Forty days and forty nights**. Not fasting by day and feasting by night. The length of the fast is not incredible. Comp. the fasts

3 hungered. And the tempter came and said unto him,
If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones
4 become ¹bread. But he answered and said, It is

¹ Gr. *loaves*.

of Moses (Ex. 34: 28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19: 8).^{*} Absorption in intellectual pursuits, but especially in spiritual contemplation, will render any one for a time independent of ordinary food or nourishment. If necessary, supernatural support would be granted. There is nothing here to encourage asceticism, however. Our Lord was enduring for us, not prescribing fasts to us. He neither practised nor enjoined monastic habits. He freely moved *in* the world as one who was *above* the world. The motto of Christian ethics is not flight from the world, but conquest of the world by transforming it into the kingdom of God. Christ at the wedding-feast changing water into wine.—**He afterward hungered.** The wants of His human body were no longer overborne. Here for the first time the Gospel presents our Lord as sharing our physical needs. The glorious attestation to His Sonship preceded, the victory over Satan followed. Sent by God to triumph for us, He appears identified with us. Even when weakest physically, when the temptation would be strongest, He overcame in our nature what enslaves our unaided nature.—**The tempter came.** Luke (4: 2) says that Jesus had been tempted during the forty days of fasting. 'Tempter,' the 'one tempting,' implying that this was his office or business. Actual approach is suggested by the literal meaning: 'And the one tempting coming, said to Him.'

FIRST TEMPTATION. Vers. 3, 4. **If thou art the Son of God.** The emphasis rests on 'Son.' On any theory, the tempter meant by 'Son,' what our Lord had been declared to be at His baptism. That he would not have dared to tempt Jesus, had he known who He was, is an unwarranted supposition. Sin is blind and blinding. The language implies more of taunt than doubt. Malicious taunting is more like Satan than ignorant doubting.—**Command that, lit., 'speak in order that' these stones (may) become bread, lit., 'loaves.'** A challenge to the hungering Messiah to display His miraculous power, as if he had said, Can the Son of God hunger? The tempter sought to overcome His trust in God. The demand was for magic, rather than miracle. (*Zauberbrod*, not *Wunderbrod*.) What Satan suggested resembles not the miracles of the Gospels, but the legends of the Apocryphal Gospels, and many 'Lives of the Saints.'

Ver. 4. It is written. Deut. 8: 3. 'It has been and still is written,' is the full meaning of this phrase. Each suggestion was answered by a passage from Scripture. A hint to honor the Old Testament, which is rendered emphatic by this particular quotation. Jesus, who was fulfilling the law, answers Satan from the law. The

^{*} The experiment was successfully tried by an eccentric physician. Dr. Tanner, in New York, who lived forty days of water and air, and recovered completely in the summer of 1880.

written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
 5 Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he

connection is strikingly appropriate: 'Jehovah suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live,' etc. The quotation is very slightly varied from the Greek of the Septuagint.—**Man.** Feeling so keenly His human needs, our Lord does not exert His Divine power, nor assert His divine dignity, but overcomes the temptation by identifying Himself with 'man,' conquering Satan for us men.—**By,** lit., 'upon,' **bread alone, i. e.,** ordinary bread, procured in the ordinary way, **but by every word,** etc. The 'word' may be a promise, command, which results in the thing needed. The reference is not to spiritual food. The simple meaning is: Man is ordinarily sustained by bread; but if it pleases God, under whose Providential care he stands, to sustain him by other means, this will be done, and was done for Israel in the desert, all done according to the word proceeding out of the mouth of God.—Thus the temptation was overcome. The needed supply doubtless came, and the hungering nature was satisfied, without the miracle the tempter suggested. We are here taught to overcome Satan with Scripture; to trust God for extraordinary help in extraordinary circumstances; as He suffered thus, sharing our needs, we may believe that we can triumph thus, partaking of His fulness.

SECOND TEMPTATION; vers. 5-7. Luke mentions this last. The order here is probably exact; vers. 5, 8, indicate an order of succession, which is not necessarily implied in Luke's account. The closing verses in the two narratives confirm this view. Matthew says: 'Then the devil leaveth him.' Luke (4: 13): 'And when the devil had ended every temptation.'

Ver. 5. Then. Probably immediately afterwards.—**Taketh him,** as a companion. Force is not necessarily implied, though Satan may have had for the time being some power over His weakened body. The greater humiliation of being tempted by Satan included the less, that of being conducted by him. The analogy of Ezekiel's motion from place to place in his vision (37: 1; 40: 2) suggests a spiritual rather than physical locomotion.—**Into the holy city.** Undoubtedly Jerusalem (27: 53; Rev. 11: 2). Some suppose Jesus of His own accord went to Jerusalem for a day, and was there met by the tempter, i. e., by some one who had authority in the temple. The Evangelists, who write so simply, could easily have told us this, had they so understood it.—**And he set him.** The conducting and setting were of a similar character.—**On the pinnacle of the temple, i. e.,** the whole enclosure. The word 'pinnacle' (Gr. lit., 'little wing') means either a wing, or a pointed roof, or a gable. The roof of the temple itself was covered with spikes to prevent birds from defiling it. A portico of the temple is meant, probably that called the Royal Porch, which overlooked the valley of Jehoshaphat at a dizzy height of 400 cubits. There is nothing to indicate that the tempter desired Jesus to work a

6 set him on the ¹pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

And on their hands they shall bear thee up,

Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt

8 not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth

¹ Gr. *wing*.

miracle in the sight of the people in the court of the temple. James the Just, the brother of the Lord, was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple into one of its courts.

Ver. 6. The devil takes the weapon with which he had been already overcome. He, too, 'can cite Scripture for his purpose.' But the result proves that Satan was but a surface-reader, or rather a wilful perverter of the Scriptures.—**He shall give**, etc. From Ps. 91: 11, 12. This promise to all God's people seems specially applicable to 'the Son of God.' The words: 'in all thy ways,' are omitted here, but without altering the sense. The original is poetic. Satan uses it literally, tempting to a rash confidence, as in the first instance to distrust. It was also a temptation to avoid the appointed endurance, and by one striking exercise of power, prove himself the Messiah.

Ver. 7. **Again it is written**. Not 'written again.' In another place; Deut. 6: 16. Our Lord corrects the misinterpretation of poetic Scripture by citing a plain statement of the law. The original has 'ye;' but Jesus answers: **Thou shalt not tempt**, turning it directly upon the tempter, for every tempting (trying) of God is caused by Satan.—**The Lord thy God**. By such rash confidence God would be tempted. The direct address involves another thought: that Satan in thus tempting Him, was tempting the Lord his God. Religious fanaticism is a tempting of God.

THIRD TEMPTATION; vers. 8-10.

Ver. 8. **An exceeding high mountain**. Its situation can only be conjectured; the Mount of Olives, which was only relatively high; others, the mountain in the wilderness, Quarantania; others: Nebo, Tabor, Mt. Sinai.—**Showeth him**. Luke adds: 'in a moment of time;' this may imply some supernatural extension of vision. Magical influence on the part of Satan is less probable than an actual pointing out of the regions in sight, and a vivid description of the adjoining realms.—**All the kingdoms of the world**; not to be restricted to Palestine, a narrower meaning which 'world' occasionally has, but never in such a phrase. It becomes intelligible on the theory suggested: actual vision with added rhetorical description, or some spiritual vision. For on no mountain in Palestine or any other country

him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of
 9 them; and he said unto him, All these things will I
 give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.
 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for
 10 it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and
 11 him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him;
 and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

can one literally see all the kingdoms of the world. (See Milton's description in 'Paradise Regained,' Bk. III.)

Ver. 9. Satan in his true character.—**All these things, i. e.,** 'all that renders them attractive to the love of power, pleasure, wealth, honor' (J. A. Alexander).—**Will I give thee.** The world since the fall of man is, to a certain extent, under the power of Satan, not absolutely nor permanently, indeed, but actually, and by divine permission; hence he says in Luke 4: 6: 'it has been delivered unto me.' He is 'the prince of this world,' as Christ calls him (John 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11). His greatest weapons are his half-truths, his perversions of the truth. Recognizing in this Person One who would reconquer a kingdom for Himself, he offers to surrender his own part of this kingdom in its temporal extent. But Christ's sway over the world was not of a kind that could be given by Satan, however wide and deep-seated the power of the latter might be. Yet to Jesus, who as a man must conquer the world through suffering and death, this was a real temptation.—**If thou wilt fall down and worship me.** The next verse shows that religious worship is meant; devil-worship in this case. Satan, fallen through ambition, would ask no less for his dominion. His price is always exorbitant. The proposal was bold, but in the contest between them it must come to this. Satan at last offers all he could, but throwing away all disguise, asks from One tempted on all points like as we are, what he asks from us.

Ver. 10. **Get thee hence.** A single word, 'begone,' 'avaunt,' expressing abhorrence of both person and proposal.—**Satan.** Addressed by name, having spoken in his true character as 'adversary.' Even Peter was once rebuked with the same words, when he sought to tempt his Master away from the path of duty, Matt. 16: 23.—**For,** giving a reason for rejecting the proposal, and also for his going hence, from the presence of One who instead of rendering worship, could claim it.—**It is written,** Deut. 6: 13.—**Thou shalt worship,** etc. The two clauses taken together forbid every kind of religious homage to any other than Jehovah—God. When Jesus of Nazareth permitted religious adoration of Himself, He virtually declared that He was Jehovah our God. Tempted yet sinless, hungry yet Divine, He is ready to sympathize with us and able to succor us.

Ver. 11. **Leaveth him.** Luke (4: 13), 'for a season.' He was

CHAPTER 4: 12-25.

*The Preaching of Jesus and the calling of the Fishermen ;
He heals the Sick and Multitudes gather about Him.*

12 Now when he heard that John was delivered up, he tempted again and again ; at last in Gethsemane and on the cross.—**Angels.** Spiritual beings, probably in visible form on this occasion. Alone in the contest, He had these companions after His victory. This explains the word of the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man, John 1: 51.—**Ministered.** Most naturally means, ‘supplied Him with food,’ as in the case of Elijah ; 1 Kings 19: 5. Others think, ‘gave him spiritual companionship,’ to support Him and prove that ‘man doth not live by bread alone.’ The view that the angels brought Him food, accords better with the events just narrated. He who would not turn stones into bread was now fed ; He who would not call upon angels to uphold Him in rash confidence, was now sustained by them ; He who demanded worship for God alone, received homage from these servants of God.

For fruitful, doctrinal and practical reflections of the history of temptation see Lange. Bengel calls it an ‘epitome of all temptations.’

The Preaching of Jesus and the calling of the Fishermen ; He heals the Sick and Multitudes gather about Him, vers. 12-25.

CONTENTS AND CONNECTION. The appearance of Jesus as the light of the world amidst the darkness of the land of Galilee, in accordance with prophecy (vers. 12-16). The record begins at the close of the ministry of John the Baptist, whose message is reannounced by Jesus (ver. 17). He chooses four fishermen as His attendants (vers. 18-22), goes through Galilee healing the sick and followed by great multitudes from all parts of the country (vers. 23-25). Matthew, as well as Mark and Luke, begin their account of our Lord's ministry at this point. A number of events recorded by John (1: 19; 4: 64) certainly intervened ; including the first Passover at Jerusalem. Some place the second Passover (John 5: 1) before this section, which they record as the beginning of the second year of our Lord's ministry. The fourth Gospel concerns itself more with events in Jerusalem, the others with those in Galilee. This may arise from different sources of information or from difference in plan.

Ver. 12. When he heard, i. e., in Judæa.—Delivered up, i. e., into prison by Herod, the tetrarch. For reason of this imprisonment, see chap. 14: 4; Mark 6: 17.—**He withdrew into Galilee.** A withdrawal from prudence (as in chap 2: 12, 22), hinting that He had been teaching in Judæa. ‘Galilee’: here the whole region of that name, since Nazareth was in lower Galilee. In John 4: 43-45, it means upper Galilee, or Galilee in the stricter sense. Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, hence the withdrawal was not through fear of him. It was due to the opposition of the Pharisees (John 4: 1, and 5: 16, 18, if that occurrence preceded).

- 13 withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, 14 in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ¹by Isaiah the prophet, saying,
- 15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
²Toward the sea, beyond Jordan,
 Galilee of the ³Gentiles,

¹Or, through.²Gr. *The way of the sea.*³Gr. *nations*: and so elsewhere.

Ver. 13. **And leaving Nazareth,** His early home. Because rejected there (Luke 4: 16-30). A second rejection took place at a later period (comp. chap. 13: 54-58; Mark 6: 1-6). If there were but one (as many think), it occurred at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, since Luke's account is so particular. Against the identity, see notes on Luke, and on chap. 13: 54-58.—**Came and dwelt,** or having come He settled.—**In Capernaum.** A thriving commercial place on the northwestern shore of the sea (or lake) of Galilee, hence called here 'the maritime,' which is the literal meaning of the word paraphrased: **which is by the sea,** (better, 'on the shore of the lake'). Mentioned, not to distinguish it, but on account of the prophecy which follows. It was also in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. Capernaum, means village of Nahum, or village of consolation. It was an important place, the residence of Andrew, Peter, and the sons of Zeb-edee, probably of Matthew also, and is honored by the title, 'His own city' (chap. 9: 1). It has entirely disappeared, as predicted by our Lord (Matt. 11: 25), and its very site is disputed. Some place it at Khan Minyeh, at the northern end of the plain of Gennesareth (El-Ghuweir), others (with more plausibility, and almost certainty), two or three miles further north-east at Tell Hûm (Hill of Nahum), where important ruins (including a synagogue) still remain. See Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 343, and his *Bible Dictionary* sub. 'Capern.'

Ver. 14. **That it might be fulfilled.** The purpose of fulfilling prophecy ever involves the higher purpose of carrying out God's plan thus revealed.—**Isaiah the prophet,** Is. 9: 1, 2. An independent and free translation. The Septuagint is quite incorrect here.

Ver. 15. **The land of Zebulun,** etc. These words form the close of a sentence in the original prophecy, and are introduced to specify the region spoken of in this Messianic prediction. Either an apostrophe to these regions, or equivalent to: as to the land of Zebulun, etc. The sense is the same.—**By the way of the sea.** The sea (or lake) of Galilee, not the Mediterranean. The latter view would indicate that the region was profane, being the way of the sea for all the world. But this seems forced.—**Beyond Jordan,** or, 'the Jordan.' Either the country on the west side already spoken of,

- 16 The people which sat in darkness
 Saw a great light,
 And to them which sat in the region and shadow
 of death,
 To them did light spring up.
- 17 From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say,
 Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

or Perea on the east side. (Both senses are sustained by Old Testament usage.) The former is preferable, since the various terms of the verse seem to be in apposition.—**Galilee of the Gentiles.** Upper Galilee, already spoken of by other names. It was near Gentile territory, and probably had a large Gentile population, speaking the Greek language.

Ver. 16. **The people;** of the region just described.—**Sitting in darkness.** Dwelling contentedly. Isaiah says: 'walking;' but Matthew indicates that the condition was worse. 'Darkness' is the usual Scriptural figure for a state of depravity, including more than ignorance.—**Saw a great light.** The past tense in prophecy indicates certain fulfilment. This region had seen Christ, the light of men, bringing to them 'truth, knowledge, moral purity, and happiness!' The article brings this out more fully.—**The region and shadow of death.** Poetic parallelism, a stronger expression for 'darkness,' meaning either the region where death resides and the shadow he produces, or simply the region of the shadow of death. Darkness is spiritual death.—**Did light spring up,** as a star or the sun arises, the persons being passive. The Galilæans, though probably not more barbarous and depraved than the inhabitants of Judæa, were despised. Here the light arose; to those in the shadow of death the light came. Among the despised, those furthest from the temple, the work began and met with best success. This prophecy was not understood by the official interpreters (John 7: 52).

Ver. 17. **From that time.** Either of this settlement in Capernaum, or the imprisonment of John the Baptist.—**Jesus began to preach.** The beginning of the ministry in Galilee, to an account of which Matthew confines himself. During most of the time he was probably an eye-witness.—**Repent ye; for the kingdom,** etc. Comp. note chap. 3: 2. Jesus 'began' with the message of His forerunner. The expression 'at hand' indicates that Jesus had not yet publicly declared Himself to be the Messiah. But John had announced Him; He had been accepted as such by Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael (John 1: 41, 45, 49), and by many others (John 4: 1, 39, 41). As He afterwards sent out His disciples with the same formula (10: 7), His preaching at this period was not of a different character from His subsequent teachings.

- 18 And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.
 19 And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will

Ver. 18. And walking. The omission of the word 'Jesus' connects this verse closely with what precedes; the 'walking' was while preaching (ver. 17). This close connection is brought out more fully in the account of Luke (5: 1-11).—**The sea or lake of Galilee.** The Greek word, like the German *See*, is applied to both lakes and seas. This sea of Galilee or lake of Gennesaret, called in the Old Testament Connereth (Deut. 2: 17), or Cinneroth (1 Kings 15: 20), is a body of water of oval shape, from twelve to fourteen miles long, and about half as broad. It is formed by the river Jordan, although smaller streams flow into it. 'The water is salubrious, fresh and clear: it contains abundance of fish; the banks are picturesque, although at present bare; toward the west they are intersected by calcareous mountains,—towards the east the lake is bounded by high mountains (800 to 1,000 feet high), partly of chalk and partly of basalt formation.' It is subject to sudden and violent storms, and is remarkable for its depression, being 653 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. See Bible Dictionaries.—**Simon**, contracted from Simeon. He was called first.—**Who is called Peter**, *i. e.*, 'so called' at the time when the Gospel was written, not at the time of the event here narrated. See chap. 16: 18. At a previous interview, however (John 1: 42), our Lord had declared he should be named 'Cephas' (the Aramaic form of the same name).—**Andrew his brother.** This Greek name shows how common that language was in the East. It is not known which was the elder brother; sometimes one and sometimes the other is named first. Their home was Bethsaida (John 1: 44). Andrew and another disciple of John the Baptist, probably the Evangelist John, were the first followers of Jesus (John 1: 35-40). They may have remained with him. Philip was called to follow him (John 1: 43).—**Casting a net.** They were busy at their usual avocation, for they were fishers. This does not imply special poverty or ignorance. The fishing trade was very prosperous on the lake of Galilee.

Ver. 19. Come ye after me (O. V.: 'Follow me'). Christian life in a nutshell. This call is to be distinguished from the previous acquaintanceship and discipleship (John 1), and also from the later choice and call to the apostleship (Matt. 10). The call is thus expanded: '1. An invitation to full communion with Him; 2. A demand of perfect self-renunciation for His sake; 3. An announcement of a new sphere of activity under Him; 4. A promise of rich reward from Him.—The call of Jesus to follow Him: 1. A call to faith; 2. A call to labor; 3. A calling to suffering and cross-bearing; 4. A call to our blessed home.' (Lange.) This call to personal attendance probably in all cases preceded the call to the apostleship. Even this office did not

20 make you fishers of men. And they straightway left
 21 the nets, and followed him. And going on from
 thence he saw other two brethren, ¹James the son of
 Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebe-
 dee their father, mending their nets; and he called
 22 them. And they straightway left the boat and their
 father, and followed him.

¹ Or, *Jacob*: and so elsewhere.

obtain full validity until the day of Pentecost, when the Church was organized. The Twelve were gradually prepared for their work. Paul's case is exceptional.—**I will make you.** His power, not their ability, made them what they became.—**Fishers of men.** 'The main points of resemblance cannot be mistaken, such as the value of the object, the necessity of skill as well as strength, of vigilance as well as labor, with an implication, if not an explicit promise, of abundance and success in their new fishery.' (J. A. Alexander.) Our Lord uses human agents; even He did not labor alone. Let no one assume to be independent of others in any good work. We have here the germ of the parable of the net, Matt. 13: 47. Christ and His disciples are the fishers, the souls of men the fishes, the evil world the sea, the gospel the net, the eternal life the shore. In the oldest Christian hymn extant (by Clement of Alexandria) Christ is addressed as:

'Fisher of men, the blest,
 Out of the world's unrest,
 Out of sin's troubled sea,
 Taking us, Lord, to Thee.'

Ver. 20. **Straightway** (the same word as in ver. 22). Emphatic; there was no delay. Luke tells of a miraculous draught of fishes, which preceded and prepared the fishermen to obey. His narrative assumes that Jesus was known to them (Luke 5: 5), and that they gave up their occupation to follow our Lord constantly.

Ver. 21. **Going on from thence.** (Mark: 'a little further.') All four had assisted in the great draught of fishes (see Luke 5: 7, 10).—**James, i. e., Jacob.** Probably the older brother.—**John, the Apostle and Evangelist.** The detailed account he gives of our Lord's previous ministry and miracles suggests that he was among the 'disciples' he mentions, John 2: 2, 11, 12; 4: 1, 8, 27, 81.—**In the boat,** a fishing boat (not a 'ship'), probably drawn upon the shore.—**Mending,** or 'putting their nets in order,' preparing them for use.—**He called them,** probably using the same words.

Ver. 22. These two brothers **straightway** obeyed, leaving their father also. He was not poor, as he had 'hired servants' (Mark 1: 20), and his wife, Salome, was among the pious women who ministered unto the Lord of their substance (Matt. 27: 55, 56; Luke 8: 8). The

23 And ¹Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the ²gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all

¹ Some ancient authorities read *he*.

² Or, *good tidings*: and so elsewhere.

lesson, more plainly taught elsewhere, is: Renounce every human tie, if necessary, to follow Christ. Yet human ties are not severed by following Christ. The brothers remained brethren in the Lord, and these four companions in fishing were joined more closely as 'fishers of men.' Comp. Mark 13: 3.

Ver. 23. **And he went about in all Galilee.** The sphere of His ministry is thus marked; its character is thus described. 'Galilee' here probably includes the whole fertile and well-peopled district thus named, not upper Galilee alone. The people of Judæa looked down on the Galilæans, partly because of their contact with the heathen, partly because of their dialect (comp. chap. 26: 73). The inhabitants of a sacred capital city would have unusual contempt for ignorant provincials.—**Teaching.** The people recognized Him as a Rabbi (see below).—**In their synagogues.** 'During the Babylonish exile, when the Jews were shut out from the Holy Land, and from the appointed sanctuary, the want of places for religious meetings, in which the worship of God, without sacrifice, could be celebrated, must have been painfully felt. Thus synagogues may have originated at that period. When the Jews returned from Babylon, synagogues were planted throughout the country for the purpose of affording opportunities for publicly reading the law, independently of the regular sacrificial services of the temple (Neh. 8: 1, etc.). At the time of Jesus there was at least one synagogue in every moderately sized town of Palestine (such as Nazareth, Capernaum, etc.), and in the cities of Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece, in which Jews resided (Acts 9: 2 ff.). Larger towns possessed several synagogues; and it is said that there were no fewer than 460, or even 480, of them in Jerusalem itself.' Winer.—The service was simple, and our Lord availed Himself of the opportunity of making remarks usually given (comp. Luke 4: 16-27; Acts 13: 15). Neither Christ nor His Apostles attempted to subvert the established order of worship. They attended the synagogue service, with which Christian worship has more in common than with that of the temple. The influence that revolutionized the world was not revolutionary. When the tree is made good, it grows according to its God-given form; hacking from without only mars it.—**Preaching** (heralding), teaching and proclaiming, **the gospel of the king - dom.** The good tidings about 'the kingdom of heaven,' or which introduced this kingdom. The good tidings of the kingdom consist of facts about the King (comp. Rom. 1: 1-4). As our Lord was a wise Teacher, He did not publicly proclaim Himself the Messiah. His preaching was preparatory; the full gospel could not be preached

24 manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, ¹ possessed with devils, and epileptic, 25 and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and from beyond Jordan.

¹ Or, *demoniacs*.

until after the occurrence of the facts it presents. As a Rabbi, the Galilæans would hear Him; they looked for a less lowly King.

To confirm this preaching, of a new and startling character, our Lord wrought miracles: **Healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness**, etc. His 'doing good' in this lower form had a higher purpose, to prove a Saviour in a higher sense. On the miracles of our Lord, see chap. 8. The two words, 'disease' and 'sickness' include all forms of bodily affliction. The first word occurs again in ver. 24, hence we render it 'disease' here.

Ver. 24. **The report.** 'Fame' (O. V.) has changed its meaning.—**Syria**, the name of the largest Roman province north and east of Palestine, sometimes including it. Probably used here in its widest extent.—**They brought to him all that were sick.** Those who had heard of Him and believed in His power to heal were numerous enough to justify this expression.—**Holden**, i. e., under the continued power of the maladies.—**Torments**, painful bodily afflictions, such as the three specified in the next clause ('and' is to be omitted).—**Possessed with devils**, (better, demons), lit., 'demonized.' All the Gospel statements in regard to this affliction imply that in those days evil spirits actually invaded the bodies of men, producing fearful effects. Every such possession was a sign of Satan's hostility, as every dispossession was a triumph over him. We cannot explain how such possession took place. This passage distinguishes demoniacal possession from every kind of sickness.—**Epileptics**, or 'lunatics,' (moon-struck, from the belief in the disturbing influence of the moon upon the brain, as the stroke of the sun upon the body). The former sense is probable, since the word has this meaning in chap. 17: 15 (the only other place where the term occurs). The Greek word had originally the same reference to the influence of the moon which is found in 'lunatic.'—**And palsied**, or paralytics. The original word corresponds exactly. Those afflicted with morbid relaxation of the nerves, as in paralysis and apoplexy.—**He healed them.** Whatever the form, He did not fail to cure.

Ver. 25. **Great multitudes**, lit., 'many crowds.' These came from all parts of Palestine; from **Galilee**, where he preached. **Decapolis** (meaning 'ten cities'), a district principally east of the Jordan and the Lake of Galilee, including Scythopolis, Gadara, Pella, and Damascus; according to Ritter, settled by the veterans of Alexander

the Great. **Jerusalem**, the capital. **Judæa**, the southern part of Palestine. **And from beyond** (the) **Jordan**, here referring to the northern part of **Peræa**, on the east of the Jordan, south of Decapolis. The compact style of the original requires the omission of 'from,' except in the case of the locality last named, 'from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem and Judæa, and from beyond the Jordan.'

CHAPTERS 5-7.

The Sermon on the Mount.

1. **GENERAL CHARACTER.** The magna charta of Christ's Kingdom: His inaugural address; the unfolding of His righteousness; the sublimest code of morals ever proclaimed on earth; the 'perfect law of liberty' (Jas. 1: 25). The counterpart of the legislation on Mount Sinai: Christ here appears as Lawgiver and King; Moses spoke in God's name from the mount of terror; Christ speaks in His own from the mount of blessing; Christ begins where Moses ends, with the character of the inner man, with the humble and contrite spirit produced by the legitimate operation of the law.—Its position, contents, connection, as well as the whole tenor of the New Testament, show that this sermon marks the end of the law and the beginning of the gospel, the connecting link between the two: (1) a call to repentance for the unconverted, showing them their distance from the holiness required by the law; (2) a mirror of the divine will for believers, showing them the ideal of Christian morality; (3) an announcement of blessings (beatitudes) to all in whom the law has fulfilled its mission, to create a sense of sin and guilt, to beget humility and meekness of spirit, as well as to encourage and impel to higher attainments. It is at once a warning, a standard and a promise, but not the whole gospel. The gospel is *about* Christ as well as *from* Christ. This discourse contains little about His Person and Work; nor could it. The audience was not ready, not even the Twelve; the facts were not accomplished; the Teacher was still in His humiliation; only when He was glorified did the full glory of the gospel appear. But while the Sermon on the Mount is not the full gospel, its tone is evangelical, and its ideal is Christian; not telling how or why we are saved, it implies throughout that God must and will save. Addressed to those under the law, it is the best introduction to the gospel.

2. **LEADING THOUGHT AND PLAN.** The connection is with chap. 4: 17: 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' The motive to repentance was the coming of the 'kingdom,' about which the Jews had wrong expectations. These errors are met at the outset by a description of the character of the citizens of that kingdom, while the call to repentance is both expanded and enforced in the body of the discourse, which spiritualizes the law. The leading thoughts are respecting the true standard of righteousness, negatively, higher than the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees (chap. 5: 20), positively, like God's (chap. 5: 48). The Golden Rule (7: 12) is not the leading thought, since the ethics of the discourse are religious; see notes.

The discourse follows the method of natural association, although in some cases the connection is difficult to determine. A 'plan' is simply such an analysis as will help us to understand it as a whole.

Chap. 5. A description of the character of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, their relation to the world (vers. 3-16); the relation of Christ to the law, with His ex-

position of the law, culminating in a reference to God's perfection (vers. 17-48).—Chap. 6. Religious duties; the false and true performance of them contrasted (vers. 1-18); instruction regarding dedication of the heart to God and consequent trust in Him (vers. 19-34).—Chap. 7. Caution against censoriousness, prayer enjoined through promise of an answer, to which promise the Golden Rule is annexed (vers. 1-12); exhortation to self-denial, warning against false teachers and false professions (vers. 13-23); conclusion, two similitudes respecting obedient and disobedient hearers (vers. 24-27). The impression produced on the multitude (vers. 28, 29.)

3. RELATION OF THE DISCOURSES IN MATTHEW AND LUKE (6 : 20-49).

Points of agreement: Both begin with beatitudes, end with the same similitudes, contain substantially the same thoughts, frequently expressed in the same language. In both Go-pels an account of the healing of the centurion's servant immediately follows.—Points of difference: Matthew gives one hundred and seven verses, Luke but thirty; Matthew seven (or nine) beatitudes, Luke four, followed by four 'woes.' Luke is sometimes fuller than Matthew, and the order is occasionally different. Our Lord was sitting (ver. 1) when this discourse was delivered; apparently standing (Luke 6 : 17) during the other. This was uttered on a mountain, the other on a plain.

Explanations: (a) Two reports of the same discourse; each Evangelist modifying to suit his purpose. This is the common view, involving fewer difficulties. (Origen, Chrysostom, Calvin, Bengel, Meyer, Keil.) The priority and completeness belongs to Matthew. It is then assumed, that our Lord was standing immediately before the discourse, but sat down to speak; that on the mountain there was a plain just below the summit (the fact in the traditional locality: 'the Horns of Hattin,' or 'Kur'n Hattin,' see ver. 1). The chronological difficulty is not serious. Matthew mentions the sending out of the Twelve (chap. 10), not the choice, which is narrated by Mark and Luke. The latter immediately preceded the discourse (so Luke), the former took place some time after. The mention by Matthew of his own call out of its chronological position is readily accounted for (see in chap. 9 : 1-17).

(b) Two discourses on entirely different occasions, each with a distinct purpose and method. (So Augustin, Storr, Plumptre and others). This is an improbable solution, not called for by the chronological difficulties. The mention of the same miracle as immediately following in both Gospels shows that the occasions, if different, were not widely separated.

(c) Different discourses, but delivered in immediate succession; the Sermon on the Mount to the disciples, the Sermon on the Plain to the multitudes. So Lange. Favored by the direct address to the disciples, and the allusion to the Pharisees (Matt. 5), not found in Luke's account; opposed however by the fact that the multitudes also heard the longer discourse (Matt. 7 : 28).

(d) Two summaries of our Lord's teaching about this time, not reports of particular discourses. Such summaries would be in an appropriate place, since in both cases a general sketch of our Lord's ministry precedes. But both Evangelists specify the place, and even our Lord's posture.

Accepting the differing reports of the same discourse, we should remember that the Evangelists did not compose their histories from written documents and with literal accuracy in details, but chiefly (according to Oriental fashion) from memory, which was then much better trained than now, and from living impressions of the whole Christ, strengthened and guarded by the Holy Spirit. Hence we have after all a truer, more life-like and instructive account of our Lord's ministry, just as pictures embodying

CHAPTER 5: 1-16.

A Description of the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; their Relation to the World.

5: 1 AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples

the varied expressions of a man's countenance are more true to the life than a photograph which can only fix the momentary image. This fact accounts both for the remarkable essential agreement and the decided individuality and difference in detail, which characterize the Gospels. The two reports of the Sermon on the Mount present in a striking manner these characteristics. The *date* is probably just after the feast mentioned in John 5: 1, if that is to be placed during the Galilean ministry. Our Lord had certainly been preaching in Galilee for some time, and had already aroused the antagonism of the Pharisees.

The Sermon on the Mount commands the admiration of all good and decent men, even rationalists and infidels. But Christ is far more than a teacher of the purest system of ethics, He acted it out in a spotless life, He is a Saviour and a King, and only from the Son of God could such a moral code proceed.

A Description of the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; their Relation to the World, vers. 1-16.

CONTENTS. The scene (ver. 1), the formal preface of the Evangelist (ver. 2); the opening description of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven (vers. 3-10); their relation to the world (vers. 11-16), in the form of a personal application. The discourse opens with a simplicity that would be abrupt, were it not so full of blessing. Only One bringing heaven's blessedness to earth could thus speak.—*The beatitudes* (so called from *beati*, the word which begins these verses in the Latin version) are usually spoken of as seven in number, vers. 10, 11, being considered supplementary, i. e., ver. 10 sums up the preceding seven under the comprehensive term of *righteousness*, and ver. 11 applies the whole to the disciples. Describing one class of persons, they explain each other. Others count eight or nine.—Contrasts: Sinai and the Mount of Beatitudes; the law ends with blessing to those who keep it; Christ begins with blessings to those who through it have been brought to a sense of sin and guilt. The citizens of the kingdom, as the Jews expected them to be, and as Christ declared them to be (comp. on this contrast, the beatitudes and 'woes' of Luke's account; chap. 6: 20-26); those whom they regarded as blessed; and those whom He pronounced so; these beatitudes found in the Old Testament, but only in the light that Christ sheds upon it; the world's judgment and Christ's judgment as to qualities to be honored; the world had honored and deified courage, wisdom, and strength; Christ proclaims as divine, humility, contrition, meekness, mercy, purity, peaceableness, and patient endurance.

Ver. 1. **Seeing the multitudes.** Comp. Mark 4: 7, 8; Luke 6: 17, on the gathering of these multitudes.—**He went up.** Not to avoid them, but to gather from them a willing audience.—**Into the mountain,** the Horns of Hattin, according to tradition. There the last battle of the crusaders was fought. The mountain lies on the

- 2 came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,
 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

south of the lake on the way to Nazareth. Stanley: 'It is the only height seen in this direction from the lake of Gennesareth. The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes' walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the "level place" to which He would "come down" as from one of its higher horns to address the people.' This suits the requirements of the view that Matthew and Luke report the same discourse (see note, p. 49). The central situation would also permit the gathering there of multitudes from all quarters.—**When he had sat down, or was seated.** The usual posture of an Oriental teacher, and the natural one for familiar instruction.—**His disciples came unto him.** The Twelve had already been chosen (comp. Mark 3: 14; Luke 7: 13-20); but this was not an ordination discourse to them. It is too general, and they were not to be sent out at once. The ordination discourse is in chap. 10. 'His disciples' may include all who came to be taught, as distinguished from the 'multitudes' who had come to see the miracles of healing.

Ver. 2. **Opened his mouth.** A formula indicating 'a solemn and authoritative utterance;' comp. references. He had before opened the mouths of others; the King Himself now becomes the Teacher. When the Lord opens His mouth, *we* should open our ears and hearts. Luther's homiletical advice: 'Get up freshly, open your mouth widely, be done quickly.' The whole Sermon on the Mount, though the longest, not more than thirty minutes.—**Taught,** literally, 'was teaching,' implying either continued or habitual discourse. It is appropriate, whether this sermon was uttered on one occasion, or is a summary of our Lord's teachings.

Vers. 3-11. The beatitudes constitute an ascending series. The same thoughts are found in the Old Testament, but only since Christ has been found there.—**Blessed.** The word, first applied to God, means more than 'happy.' Happiness may come from earthly things; blessedness comes from God. It is not bestowed arbitrarily; a reason follows each beatitude. It is a permanent state of spiritual felicity.

Ver. 3. **The poor in spirit,** or in heart, in disposition, not 'in body,' nor 'in mind.' The humble, those conscious of their spiritual needs, and thus prepared to be filled with the riches of the gospel, no matter whether they be rich or poor in this world's goods, whether they be learned or illiterate. The discourse begins at the beginning; sense of want comes before spiritual blessings; the fruit of the law and the germ of the gospel. The Jews with their carnal hopes and spiritual pride were not 'poor in spirit,' hence the appropriateness of

- 4 'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
- 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

¹ Some ancient authorities transpose vers. 4 and 5.

the introduction. Pride is always the first and great hindrance to obtaining a part in the kingdom. The church of Laodicea showed the opposite type, imagining itself rich in the spiritual life, and being poor in fact.—**For theirs is.** It belongs to them.—**The kingdom of heaven.** See notes on chap. 3: 2; comp. chap. 13. Both the habits of the Teacher and the expectations of the audience made this a familiar thought.

Ver. 4. **They that mourn**, or 'the mourning ones.' A spiritual mourning is meant, not the sorrow of the world which works death (2 Cor. 7: 10). A sense of need makes men 'poor in spirit;' but a consciousness of the positive power of sin makes them mourn. Not terror, fear of punishment, but actual sorrow that sin has power over us.—**Comforted.** This is a promise; hence the comfort comes not from ourselves, but from God. If repentance saved, then the promise would be: they shall comfort themselves.

Ver. 5. **The meek**; the mild, the gentle, the tranquil, opposed to the passionate and ambitious, who succeed in such a kingdom as the Jews were looking for. A higher quality than the preceding.—**Inherit the earth**, or 'the land,' i. e., of Canaan, the type of all blessings, not merely of spiritual ones, with an allusion probably to the prophecy of 'the kingdom of the saints of the Most High,' Dan 7: 27. The literal fulfilment is not infrequent; but the primary reference is to the Messiah's kingdom.

Ver. 6. **Hunger and thirst after righteousness.** Gr., 'The righteousness,' i. e., God's; something without us, given to us, not merely imputed to us, though that is included, but made ours, part of our life, as food is assimilated. A still stronger representation of the sense of spiritual need, advancing to positive longing, for a blessing, known to be the one needed, namely, God's approval—conformity to the will of God. Those thus hungering are blessed, **for they shall be filled**, shall get in abundance what they want. A narrow view of this righteousness interferes with the full obtaining of it.

Ver. 7. **The merciful.** Meekness is a passive virtue, mercy an active one. 'The meek bear the injustice of the world; the merciful bravely address themselves to the wants of the world.'—'Every degree of sympathy and mutual love and help' is included. The spring of

- 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

this grace is in God's mercy, although it is ever rewarded with new mercy; according to the annexed promise: **for they shall obtain mercy.** First of all, God's mercy; the merciful character is both the evidence and the measure of God's mercy. Those who forgive men will be forgiven by God (as in the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer). Mercy from men is included. All these beatitudes have a subordinate temporal application, for God rules the world, despite its sin.

Ver. 8. **The pure in heart.** Either a single virtue, or total freedom from sin. The former is here meant, *i. e.*, a simplicity of heart, or 'that steady direction of the soul toward the Divine life which excludes every other object from the homage of the heart.' More than sincerity, or chastity of feeling, or outward purity, such as the Levitical law demanded and the hearers might have deemed sufficient, or the moral purity which philosophers enjoin; it is inward purity derived from God (comp. 1 John 3: 9). Hence the promise: **they shall see God.** Fulfilled even here. This vision of God begins with the spiritual vision in the regenerate heart (Eph. 1: 18); it is perfected in the beatific vision of the saints in glory, when we shall see them no more through the reflection of a mirror, but face to face (1 Cor. 13: 12; 1 John 3: 2); perfect knowledge being combined with perfect love.

Ver. 9. **The peacemakers.** Not simply the peaceful, but those who reconcile others. However understood by Christ's hearers, we must refer it to those who proclaim and further the Gospel of peace, which alone makes men truly at peace with one another by making them at peace with God. In most kingdoms those who make war stand highest, but in the Messiah's kingdom the crowning beatitude respects those who make peace. Christ is the Peacemaker in the highest sense who by the shedding of His blood made peace between God and man, between Jew and Gentile (Col. 1: 20; Eph. 2: 14).—**They shall be called sons of God**; recognized as sons, *i. e.*, children of full age. This acknowledgment is the reward freely given of God to those doing His work of peacemaking.

Ver. 10 speaks of the blessedness of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, as opposed by the world, and the same idea is repeated in vers. 11, 12, addressed to the disciples directly. Then follows a declaration of their office in blessing the world. This variation in the thought leads most to reckon the beatitudes as *seven* in number, closing with ver. 9.

Ver. 10. **For righteousness' sake.** 'Righteousness' includes all the preceding graces; but the peacemakers are especially per-

- 11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you
 12 falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

secuted; the effort to spread the gospel of peace provokes the hostility of men. Righteous living does the same, however men may be compelled to admit its excellence. The Jews would not expect persecution to befall the Messiah's subjects. Yet **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. The promise to the 'poor in spirit' also. The only difference grows out of the nature of the parties. The 'persecuted' are probably capable of receiving a higher blessing. One class is spoken of throughout; the list of rewards begins and ends with the kingdom of heaven, a phrase summing up all the blessings, as righteousness sums up all the virtues.

Ver. 11. **Blessed are ye**. The personal application; a prophecy also, since **when men shall reproach you** (or 'revile' you, *i. e.*, reproach to your face), etc., implies that this will happen. The first revilers and persecutors were the unbelieving Jews, here referred to indefinitely.—**Falsely**, literally, 'lying' (agreeing with 'men'). The word is omitted by some authorities; but in any case it is implied.—**For my sake**. This shows that all the preceding beatitudes describe Christ's disciples, that He is embodied Righteousness. Those only suffer for righteousness' sake, who suffer for Christ's sake; elsewhere we learn more distinctly; those only are blessed with righteousness who are blessed for Christ's sake. The promised trouble for Christ's sake comes as a part of the promised blessing for Christ's sake.

Ver. 12. **Rejoice**, etc. An exhortation based on the declaration of blessedness in ver. 11, and confirming it. Needful, because the prospect of persecution is far from awakening joy.—**For great is your reward in heaven**. The reason both for rejoicing and for the blessedness. 'Reward,' *i. e.*, recompense; but of grace, not of debt (Rom. 4: 4). 'Great' implies that it would be beyond merit. 'In heaven:' either, in heaven, given in a future state of blessedness, or heavenly, spiritual, *i. e.*, in the enjoyment of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. The latter sense accords best with the language of the discourse, and culminates in the former one. True Christians are now citizens of heaven (Phil. 3: 20).—**For so persecuted they**, *i. e.*, the unbelieving Jews (as in ver. 11), **the prophets who were before you**. Jeremiah, the typical prophet of persecution. Not an express assertion that the disciples were prophets. It, however, puts them on the same level, establishes the connection between the Old and the New Testaments, showing that the old antagonism remains. A permanent reason for rejoicing, not for the greatness of the reward.

- 13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden
 14 under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A
 15 city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand;

Vers. 13-16 teach the relation of the disciples, as thus described, to the world, under the two figures of salt and light.

Ver. 13. **Ye**, *i. e.*, the disciples, though not yet forming a distinct organization. The influence here spoken of depends not upon external organizations, but upon the power of Christ in the individual believers.—**The salt of the earth.** Salt preserves; Christ's disciples preserve the world from corruption. Salt seasons food and prevents insipidity; Christians are to give a spiritual seasoning to what is made 'stale, flat, and unprofitable' by 'earthly' minds; comp. Col. 4: 6. The first thought is the prominent one. 'The earth' refers to society as it exists.—**But.** A warning against pride.—**If the salt have lost its savour.** A mere supposition,—yet salt in the East does lose its saltiness by exposure, or foreign admixture rendering it impure, and is then 'good for nothing,' except to destroy fertility. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*, vol. ii., pp. 43, 44) mentions an instance coming under his own observation. Maundrell (about A. D. 1690) reports that he found lumps of rock-salt on the Dead Sea which had partially lost the flavor. Pure salt cannot lose its savor. The doctrinal bearings of the figure need not be pressed.—**Of men.** No special emphasis seems to rest upon this phrase. The early date of the sermon forbids an exclusive reference of the verse to excommunication or deposition from the ministerial office.

Ver. 14. **The light of the world.** The influence of salt is internal, of light, external; hence 'earth' (ver. 13), and here 'world,' both referring to society or mankind, the latter more to its organized external form. Light is opposed to darkness, and dispels it; is the symbol of truth and holiness. Christ's disciples opposed to the world, and yet transforming it, by driving away its ignorance and sin. They become the light of the world, because He is 'the true light' (John 1: 9; 8: 12), and makes them partakers of His light.—**A city set on a hill.** In the East, cities are often built on hills for protection and for purer air. Even on the top of Mt. Tabor was a city where there is now a Greek and a Latin convent. Such a city may have been in sight, and Safed (visible from the Horns of Hattin) has been thought of by later travelers; but in any case, the figure is striking. The Church of God is such a city of refuge, and *must be seen*, like the light.

Ver. 15. **A lamp**, supplied with oil, and portable, as still used in the East, instead of candles. The seven-branched candlestick of the Temple had such oil-lamps.—**The bushel.** The familiar household measure, holding about a peck. Under this the light could be hid.—

16 and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

CHAPTER 5: 17-48.

Our Lord's Relation to the Law, and His Exposition of its Requirements.

17 Think not that I came to destroy the law or the

But on the stand, or 'lampstand;' its proper place, an elevated holder or stand, so that its light might be diffused as widely as possible.—**It shineth.** 'Giveth light,' implies that a certain effect is necessarily produced, but the lamp only shines,—its light may be rejected.

Ver. 16. **Even so**, i. e., like the city on the hill, the candle on the candlestick, not 'so that they may see,' as the common version might be understood.—**Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works.** Not professions or teachings, but what men, with all their prejudices against Christ's people (vers. 10-12), are forced to acknowledge as real excellences. The supreme end both of the shining and seeing is added, **and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** 'The praise and glory of a well-lighted and brilliant feast would be given, not to the light, but to the master of the house; and of a stately city on a hill, not to the buildings, but to those who built them' (Alford). The exhortation humbles in order to exalt: all good works, light-giving, purifying and preserving influences, come from God, to whom the glory belongs, but He is your 'Father.' This is the first occurrence of the gospel phrase, 'Father who is in heaven.' It is taught us by the only begotten Son of God, through whom we become by adoption sons of God, who is His Father and our Father.

Our Lord's Relation to the Law, and His Exposition of its Requirements, Vers. 17-48.

CONTENTS. Our Lord defines His relation to the old dispensation (vers. 17-19), thus introducing the negative leading thought, viz., the utter failure of the Pharisees to attain true righteousness, according to the law, which he came to fulfil (ver. 20); an exposition of the requirements of the law (vers. 21-47), culminating in the positive leading thought, our perfect heavenly Father the true standard of righteousness (ver. 48).—The occasion of this part of the discourse was, either the false notion that the Messiah would introduce a period of license (ver. 17), or the antagonism between what He had just said and the teaching of the Pharisees. The former is simpler. Still the other is natural. A popular audience generally puts an extreme construction on new doctrines; as He seemed to oppose the strict legalists, they may have asked themselves, 'Will He do away with the law.' In any case the connection with what precedes is; Our Lord shows His disciples that they are to become lights of the world (vers. 15, 16),

18 prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away

not as revolutionary radicals but as historical reformers. The law fulfilled by Christ, in Christ, through Christ. The law spiritualized, not abrogated. The gentle Teacher the most exacting; not externally but internally. The boldness ('I say unto you'), breadth, depth, and height of this exposition. Like the introduction, it culminates in a reference to our heavenly Father.

Ver. 17. **Think not.** See above. The great Teacher addresses Himself to the thoughts of the audience before Him.—**I came.** This implies that he had a special mission; not as yet a direct avowal that He was the Messiah.—**To destroy,** to undo, or do away with. Christ's mission not negative and destructive, but positive and constructive; Christianity is neither revolution nor restoration, but a new creation, which, however, conserves and perfects all that is good in the old.—**The law and the prophets.** The whole spiritual development of the Old Testament is meant. This Christ came to fulfil, to make perfect as doctrine and to exhibit perfectly in life. So that we need not limit 'law' to the ceremonial law, or 'prophets' to the Messianic predictions. Christ fulfils the law: (1) theoretically, by unfolding its deep spiritual significance, as in this sermon; (2) practically, in his holy life, a perfect pattern for imitation; (3) by realizing the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; (4) by redeeming us through His expiatory death from the penalty and curse of the broken law; (5) by enabling us, through His Holy Spirit, to fulfil the law in gratitude to Him and in living union with Him.

Ver. 18. **Verily, lit., 'Amen,' I say unto you.** The Evangelist John generally repeats the first word. The whole phrase is used by Christ alone, the absolute, personal Truth.—**Till heaven,** etc. A strong assertion of the permanent character of the law.—**Jot** means the smallest letter of the (Hebrew) alphabet (י), while **tittle**, *i. e.*, 'little horns,' refers to the small turns by which one letter was distinguished from another (as י D from י R, or ף from ן). A warning against contempt for the Old Testament, which leads at last to a denial of Christ. He has Himself fulfilled the ceremonial law; He teaches the true, higher, spiritual significance of the whole law.—**Till all things be accomplished,** or 'have come to pass.' Comp. Matt. 24: 34. 'All things,' which the law and the prophets command, promise and typify. 'Till' implies that after the great events of Christ's life and the establishment of His kingdom, the old dispensation, as a dispensation of the letter and yoke of bondage, as a system of types and shadows, will pass away, and has passed away (Eph. 2: 15; Col. 2: 14; Heb. 8: 13); while the spirit and substance of the law, *i. e.*, love to God and man, will last forever (1 Cor. 13: 8-13), and righteousness will dwell on the new earth (2 Pet. 3: 13).

19 from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 19. An application of the truth just announced.—**Whosoever, therefore**, because of this permanent character of the law.—**Shall break**, or at any time may break, **one of these least commandments**, the smallest part of this law, or, in the wider sense, of this revelation which God has made, **and shall teach men so**, by example or precept, **shall be called**, recognized as, **least in the kingdom of heaven**, in the new dispensation He was proclaiming. Such are not excluded, because not opposing the law as a whole, but only some of its minutiae. ‘Least’ may allude to the Jewish distinction between great and small commandments, which cannot exist in God’s law. The positive declaration which follows corresponds. The subsequent part of the chapter, especially the next verse, shows that our Lord does not command a strict observance of the letter of the ceremonial law. He there condemns those most scrupulous on these points. The fulfilment and the keeping of the law here required are explained by the fuller light shed upon it by the Saviour’s exposition.—**He shall be called great**. ‘He’ is emphatic here.

Ver. 20. The scribes and Pharisees, by minute explanations of the law, had made it very burdensome. The people longed for deliverance. Some hoped for it through an abolition of the law, but our Lord opposes this, by His exposition of the real demands of the law.

Except your righteousness, your obedience, rectitude, **shall exceed**, abound more than, **that of the scribes and Pharisees**, **ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven**. He exacts more than these so exact and exacting in their ‘righteousness.’—A declaration that they, with all their care, had not yet understood the real spirit of the law. Their scrupulous literal obedience was only a perversion of the law. Christ unfolds its true meaning, first, by saying that the way to obey it is not that of the Pharisees. Christ is the way to obedience. His words here are to awaken a sense of the need of Him, to enable us to attain to this ‘righteousness.’—The rest of the chapter contains five contrasts between the true fulfilment of the law and the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. We include vers. 31, 32, respecting divorce, under the second contrast (seventh commandment).

21 Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time,
 Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be
 22 in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that
 every one who is angry with his brother¹ shall be in
 danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to
 his brother, ²Raca, shall be in danger of the council;
 and whosoever shall say, ³Thou fool, shall be in dan-

¹ Many ancient authorities insert *without cause*.

² An expression of contempt.

³ Or, *Moreh*, a Hebrew expression of condemnation.

Ver. 21. **Ye have heard**, when the law was read in public, etc. (John 12: 84; Rom. 2: 13).—**It was said to** (not 'by') **them of old time**, 'the ancients.' As the passage is from the law, the indefinite phrase: 'it was said,' cannot be referred to a false teacher.—**Thou shalt not kill**. From the Decalogue, the sixth commandment (Ex. 20: 13), the first of the second table; the fifth belongs rather to the first table, containing duties to God.—**Whosoever shall kill**, commit actual murder, **shall be in danger of the judgment**, *i. e.*, subject to trial by an earthly court, probably the one in the place he lived. In every town of Palestine there was a local court consisting of seven judges, with the right to punish murder by the sword; while the Sanhedrin could also decide death by stoning. The interpretation of the scribes correct, but not complete.

Ver. 22. **But I say unto you**. This implies equal authority with Him who gave the Decalogue, greater authority than those who expounded it. The two thoughts of ver. 21 require two here. He does not oppose Moses and the decalogue, but gives its deeper spiritual meaning in opposition to the superficial interpretation of the rabbis.—**Every one who**. This is the literal sense.—**Angry with his brother**. 'Brother' is equivalent to neighbor, in the wider sense.—The best authorities omit 'without cause.' Probably inserted by way of mitigation. Several fathers expressly say that it is not in the text.—**The judgment**. As before, the earthly court.—**Raca**. This is a word of contempt, meaning either 'empty head,' or 'spit out,' *i. e.*, heretic. Frequent in rabbinical writings.—**Council**. The Sanhedrin (from the Greek *synedrium*=council) at Jerusalem, consisting of seventy-two members; the highest earthly court.—**Thou fool**. The Greek word implies 'stupid fool.' It may be a Hebrew expression ('*moreh*') containing a charge of wickedness and great impiety. Probably an allusion to the atheist, Ps. 14: 1.—**In danger of**, literally, 'into,' *i. e.*, in danger of being cast into, **the hell of fire**, 'Gehenna of fire.' Gehenna (Ge Hinnom) originally meant the Valley of Hinnom, or the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom (Gr. 'Bene Hinnom,' a name of unknown origin and meaning), a narrow gorge on the south of Jerusalem, where the horrible idolatry of Moloch with infant sacrifices was carried on under Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Ki. 16: 3; 23: 10; 2 Chron. 28: 3;

23 ger ¹ of the ² hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift
24 before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art

¹ Gr. *unto* or *into*.

² Gr. *Gehenna* of fire.

Jer. 7: 32; 19: 2). After the return of the Jews from exile, they made it a place of defilement, where all the refuse of the city and the carcasses of animals and corpses of malefactors were thrown. It was also, it is said, the scene of execution in certain cases. The name was applied to the subterranean place of future torment among the later Jews (not in the Old Testament). 'Of fire;' either because of the fires kept burning in this valley to consume the offal of the city, or on account of the worship of Moloch, practiced there, in which children were burnt alive. In either case, the whole phrase is a significant expression for the place of future punishment. It probably means this here, but not necessarily.—General sense: murderous feelings and words are deemed a proper ground of condemnation in Christ's kingdom. Comp. 1 John 3: 15. Since no earthly court does punish feelings of anger, it would seem that all three refer to God's judgments, the degrees being represented by Jewish usages. The Lord speaks here as judge according to the strict rule of divine justice, not as Saviour who delights to pardon the penitent. It is clear from the passage that there are different degrees of guilt, and that even the germ of sin in the heart condemns before God. The sin is not in the word and act as such, but in the motive and spirit. There is also a *righteous* indignation and wrath, an *innocent* use of terms like those forbidden here. Christ called the Pharisees 'fools,' and Paul applies the term to the materialist who denies the resurrection. (Comp. Matt. 23: 17, 19; Luke 24: 25; 1 Cor. 15: 36; Gal. 1: 8, 9; 3: 1, 3; Jas. 2: 20).

Ver. 23. **Therefore.** Application of the teaching just uttered.—**Art offering thy gift at the altar,** engaged in what was then, before the destruction of the temple, the highest act of worship. Even the most sacred act should make room for reconciliation.—**And there rememberest.** Proper worship makes us mindful of duty to others.—**Thy brother,** one closely connected with thee.—**Leave there thy gift.** Better postpone even an acknowledged religious duty than the duty of reconciliation. The case is put in the strongest form.—**Go thy way,** not to neglect the religious duty, but in order to **first be reconciled.** The two clauses must be closely connected.—**Then come and offer thy gift.** The reconciliation does not make the worship unnecessary. Discharge of duty to men does not absolve from duty to God. One truly reconciled to his brother is readiest to come to God in His appointed way.

Ver. 25. **Agree with thine adversary quickly.** An oppo-

with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge ¹deliver thee to the
 26 officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say
 unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence,
 till thou have paid the last farthing.

27 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not,
 28 commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one
 that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath com-

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *deliver thee*.

nent in a law-suit.—**With him in the way**, i. e., to the place of judgment, the last opportunity for settlement. The rest of the verse describes the possible course in case of losing the suit.—**Officer**, is the same as our sheriff.

Ver. 26. **Verily I say unto thee**. A higher application of the illustration. The prudent course in worldly affairs points out the prudent course in the higher sphere. The warning against law-suits is evident enough, but is not the principal thought.—**The last farthing**. A coin of insignificant value. (*Quadrans* is the fourth part of a Roman *as*, a small copper coin then common in Palestine). The meaning is: until everything is paid. If our sins be regarded as 'debts' this is impossible, but no conclusive argument for or against the eternity of punishment can be based on the figure. See, however, Luke 12: 59, where the reference to future punishment is perhaps more marked. Roman Catholic expositors understand this passage of purgatory; Universalists use it in support of their view of final restoration; but neither 'prison' nor 'till' necessarily points to ultimate deliverance. Comp. 2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6. The main idea is the inexorable rigor of divine justice against the impenitent sinner. 'The whole tone of the passage is that of one who seeks to deepen the sense of danger, not to make light of it, to make men feel that they cannot pay their debt though God may forgive it freely, accepting faith in him in lieu of payment' (Plumptre).

Ver. 27. The seventh commandment (Ex. 20: 14) is now cited, with an implied reference to the interpretation given by the scribes, namely, that adultery alone was forbidden.

Ver. 28. **Every one who**, not seeth (which is unavoidable and may be perfectly innocent), but voluntarily looketh, or gazeth with a view to lust after her. Our Lord declares, not that such an one shall be condemned, but that in his heart he has committed the sin. Adultery of the heart, and of the eye, desecrates the temple of the Holy Spirit; how much more adultery in deed.—**A woman** may mean a 'wife,' but the widest sense is not inappropriate. Parallels to this passage are found in rabbinical and classical writers; but here we have it from the spotless lips of the purest of the pure.

29 mitted adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole
30 body be cast into ¹hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go
31 into ¹hell. It was said also, Whosoever shall put

¹ Gr. *Gehenna*.

Ver. 29. An application by direct address.—**Thy right eye**, etc. Comp. chap. 18: 8, 9; Mark 9: 43-48, where the order is different. Here the 'eye' is placed first, on account of the connection with the lustful look (ver. 28). The 'right eye,' in popular esteem the better one.—**Causeth** (or 'is causing') **thee to stumble**, to fall into sin.—**Pluck it out**. Not: as soon as thine eye causeth thee to sin, pluck it out; rather: should it appear that the sight is an incurable cause of sin, then pluck it out; but such bodily mutilation would not of itself cure sin, which resides in the will, not in the organ of sense or action. We should resist 'the first springs and occasions of evil desire, even by the sacrifice of what is most useful and dear to us.'—**Cast it from thee**, as something hateful, because given over to sin. The surgeon does not hesitate to amputate a limb, if he hopes thereby to save a life; no earthly sacrifice is too great where eternal life is concerned.—**Profitable**. Such self-denial is true self-interest, as all virtue is, could we but so understand it. However 'profitable,' the overcoming of sin is painful.—**Body**, standing for the whole life here, because the sin referred to is a sin against the body.—**Hell**, *Gehenna*, not Hades; the place of punishment, not the place of the dead; hence spiritual, not physical death is referred to.

Ver. 30 repeats the same thought, instancing the **right hand**. The eye is the symbol of delight in looking (sense of beauty); the hand, the symbol of converse and intercourse (social feeling, friendship); but in any case here represented as organs of temptation.—**Go** (or, 'go away') **into hell**. The change in expression perhaps marks a development of lust inevitably tending toward hell. Here, too, we must avoid a slavish literalism, and remember the main thought, which is to spare nothing which hinders our salvation. A literal execution would turn the Church into a house of invalids, since every Christian is more or less tempted to sin by his eye or hand; nor would the cutting off of all the members, of itself, destroy lust in the heart. Here, too, the rule applies: 'The letter killeth, the spirit maketh alive.'

Ver. 31. The teaching in regard to divorce belongs properly under the exposition of the seventh commandment. Loose notions about

away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce-
 32 ment: but I say unto you, that every one that put-
 teth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornica-
 tion, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall
 marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.
 33 Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of
 old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt
 34 perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto
 you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is

divorce indicate and increase unchastity.—It was said also. Quotation from Deut. 24: 1. Our Lord says elsewhere (chap. 19: 8; Mark 10: 5), that even this precept was owing to the hardness of their hearts.—The writing of divorcement, designed not to encourage divorce, but to render it more difficult, was in effect a protection of the repudiated wife. Our Lord's explicit teaching opposed the perversion of this provision of the Mosaic law. Some of the Rabbins (even the great Hillel and his school) allowed divorce in a great variety of cases, one going so far as to make the discovery of a more pleasing woman a sufficient ground.

Ver. 32. **Fornication, or unchastity.—Maketh her an adulteress,** not by the fact of her being divorced, but in view of the extremely probable case of another marriage.—**When she is put away.** The force of the original is best given thus. The Romanists claim that this includes one divorced for the sufficient cause just mentioned; but it is doubtful, since, grammatically, the reference is still to the one divorced on insufficient grounds. Besides, a woman divorced for adultery would be stoned, according to the law, and there is here no reference to infidelity on the part of the man. The application to the case of a man is not only required by the spirit of Christ's teaching in general, but by the fact that He is here speaking of and condemning the sin of the man. This high ideal of the marriage union (comp. Eph. 5: 22, 23) is the basis of social morality and domestic happiness. To oppose it is not only unchristian, but to demoralize the family, and to make war against the welfare of humanity.

Ver. 33. A summary of the Mosaic precepts in regard to swearing; negatively, **Thou shalt not forswear thyself**; positively, **but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.** (Comp. Lev. 19: 12; Num. 25: 2.) The two-fold mistake of the Jews, answered by our Lord: that only false swearing, and swearing by the name of God, were forbidden. They probably considered no oaths binding, save those in which the name of God occurred; this error, though not mentioned, is necessarily opposed.

Ver. 34. **Swear not at all,** lit., 'not to swear at all.' The reason is given in ver. 37. The prohibition is absolute for private and social

35 the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor ¹by Jerusalem, for it is the
 36 city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or
 37 black. ²But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of ³the evil one.

¹ Or, *toward*.² Some ancient authorities read *But your speech shall be*.³ Or, *evil*; as in ver. 39; 6: 13.

life, and also for the kingdom of heaven, for which alone Christ legislates here. Civil governments, on account of the fearful amount of falsehood in the world (comp. ver. 37), must require judicial oaths as a guarantee of veracity. That these are not referred to, we infer from the example of our Lord (chap. 26: 63, 64), and of His apostles (Rom. 1: 9; Gal. 1: 20; 1 Cor. 15: 31). Objection to them often becomes a species of Pharisaism. Yet such oaths are not to be lightly administered. Those who swear least, or not at all (like Quakers and Mennonites), are most truthful and reliable. The next examples refer to the habit, so silly and sinful, of swearing in ordinary conversation.—**Neither by the heaven.** An oath then used, and considered allowable.—**For it is the throne of God.** To swear by heaven, is to swear by God Himself. Otherwise the oath is senseless. A condemnation of many phrases which are corrupted forms of actual oaths, and are used by those who scruple to swear outright.

Ver. 35. **Nor by the earth.** In this case also, the oath, if not senseless, would derive its validity from the relation of the earth to God.—**By Jerusalem**, or, strictly, 'towards,' turning towards it, as in praying. Any solemnity attending this oath came from the fact that it was **the city of the great King**, where the temple stood, the seat of the special religious government Jehovah had established over Israel.

Ver. 36. **By thy head.** No man can create a hair of his head, or even transform its color; what solemnity, then, in such an oath? Or, if carried further, to swear by what is under God's control alone, is to swear by Him, and that in a roundabout and senseless way. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*) says the Orientals to-day are fearfully profane, swearing continually by the heart, their life, the temple, or the church.

Ver. 37. **But let your speech be, Yea, yea; and Nay, nay.** Not only foolish oaths, like those cited, are forbidden, but also all unnecessary appealing to God. Even judicial appeals to God should not be multiplied. The true oath consists in the simple asseveration uttered under a sense of the presence of God, before Him, and in Him.—**Is of the evil one**, or 'of evil.' The meaning is the same in either case. All strengthening of simple yea and nay is occasioned by the presence of sin, and the power of Satan in the world.—There is no more striking

38 Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye,
and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not
39 ¹him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy
40 right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any
man would go to law with thee, and take away thy

¹ Or, *evil*.

proof of the existence of evil, than the prevalence of the foolish, low, useless habit of profanity. It could never have arisen, if men did not believe each other to be liars. Liars are most profane, and the reverse is true. Ignorance and stupidity increase the habit. Some men swear from want of ideas.

Ver. 38. **An eye for an eye.** The law of retaliation (Ex. 21 : 24) was a judicial rule, righteous in itself, and especially necessary in the East. Introduced to do away with the private revenge, so common in the time of Moses, it had been perverted into a warrant for retaliation of every kind. Our Lord teaches that while this rule is correct in law, our personal conduct should be governed by a very different principle.

Ver. 39. **Resist not him that is evil**, or, 'evil' ('wrong'). The general principle governing all the cases mentioned. Love is the greatest conqueror. Lange: 'Our Lord refers to sin and evil in the world, which is conquered by wise Christian submission rather than by strenuous resistance. To be merely passive, were weakness; but a non-resistance, from Christian principle and for a spiritual object, is true strength and real victory.'—**But whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek**, etc. An application of the principle to a case of violence against the person. Christian love must make us bear twice as much as the world, in its injustice, could demand. This neither justifies the world in its demand, nor requires passive non-resistance, since the example of Christ (John 18 : 22) and His Apostles (Acts 23 : 3) show that there is a time for standing upon our rights and defending the cause we represent. The literal observance may be Pharisaical, yet when rendered in the true spirit, has often most successfully overcome violence. These remarks apply in general to all the cases adduced. The Sermon on the Mount is not a code of laws for slaves, but an assertion of principles for children of freedom.

Ver. 40. This verse may be thus rendered: If any man desires to go to law with thee, and (by so doing) to take away thy coat (the inner garment, or tunic), let thy cloak (the more expensive upper garment) also go to him.' The 'cloak' was frequently used as a covering at night, and according to the Mosaic law (Ex. 20 : 26, 29) could not be retained as a pledge over night. Rather give up even what the law cannot seize than cherish a vindictive spirit. Christians ought not to be those 'desiring to go to law.' Such often harbor vengeance while they speak of justice.

- 41 coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall ¹compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.
 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.
 43 Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy
 44 neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute

¹ Gr. *impress*.

Ver. 41. **Compel thee**, or 'impress thee.' The word is borrowed from the Persian, and refers to couriers pressing men and beasts into the public service, a matter very obnoxious to the Jews; it includes also the quartering of soldiers, and military requisitions, etc.—**One mile**, a thousand Roman paces, about 1,520 yards (less than an English mile), but the proportion, one or two, is the main point. Endure double hardship, even when it seems most unjust, rather than angrily refuse. The stoic Epictetus furnishes a parallel: 'Should there be a forced service, and a soldier should seize thee, let him have his will; do not resist or murmur.'

Ver. 42. **Give to him that asketh thee**. Begging was as common and annoying then as now.—**And from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away**, or 'be not turned away.' Obviously to give to every beggar, to lend to every borrower, would be as hurtful to them as harassing and exhausting to us. Refusal may often be the best gift. Our gifts and loans are to be measured by the welfare, not by the desert of the asker; and to be made in the spirit of our Heavenly Father (ver. 45).

Ver. 43. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour**. (See Lev. 19: 18). The original precept referred to Israelites, and obedience to it helped to keep them distinct from other nations. But the Pharisees, to increase the distance between the Jews and Gentiles, added the converse precept: **and hate thine enemy**, meaning by 'enemy' the Gentiles (comp. Deut. 23: 6). Latin authors speak of this as a distinctive feature of the Jewish character, and charged the Jews with 'hatred of the human race.' Personal hatred was also probably justified by this assumed meaning of the words of Moses. Our Lord ('a light to lighten the Gentiles') opposes this interpretation. Separatism was necessary to preserve the Jews from heathen influence, but this addition was contrary to prophecy and to the purpose of God in sending the Messiah. (Whom He meant by 'neighbor,' we learn from Luke 10: 27 ff.)

Ver. 44. **Love your enemies**. The controlling principle, literally and universally applicable. One of the few precepts which admit of no distinction between 'letter' and 'spirit.' The law of love, once deemed applicable only to those of the same nation, is now declared valid towards all men, even personal enemies, and is enlarged into universal philanthropy. This gospel principle and Pharisaism cannot

45 you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.
 46 For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the ¹publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than*
 48 *others*? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

¹ That is, *collectors or renters of Roman taxes*; and so elsewhere.

be reconciled; here chiefly our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. By this very hatred our enemy becomes our neighbor; his hatred tempts to retaliation, leaving us no choice but to fall or else defend ourselves with the weapons of love, *i. e.*, to meet 'persecution' with 'prayer.' The briefer form of the verse, found in the best authorities, is the correct one. The parts we omit were probably inserted from Luke 6: 27, 28.

Ver. 45. **That ye may be.** Such action proves, not makes, the sonship. So doing we show our resemblance to God our Father (a relation springing from our relation to Christ) who **maketh his sun**, etc., whose love of benevolence is universal and not measured by the deserts of the persons on whom He showers His providential favors. Christ here teaches the power and providence of God in nature, as well as His character of love.

Ver. 46. For refers back to ver. 44: if your action is simply in accordance with the precept of the Pharisees, **what reward have ye?** What merit is there in it?—**The publicans**, the taxgatherers who collected the revenue for the Romans. The term was odious, because these men were the agents of the hated Romans, and because the system of letting out the collection of taxes to the highest bidder led to great abuses. The obnoxious office would soon be filled by a disreputable class; hence the phrase, 'publicans and sinners.' Even such could love those that loved them, practising in this respect a morality as high as that of the Pharisees, who despised them. It is a poor religion which does not beget a higher love than is natural to worldly men.

Ver. 47. **Gentiles.** The same idea is repeated here, except that 'heathen' is substituted for 'publicans,' according to the best authorities. The Jews, despising the Gentiles, did not usually salute them. The morality of the Pharisees is proved to be, in this respect, no better than that of the heathen.—**The same.** This is correct here; in ver. 46 it is doubtful whether we should read 'so' or 'the same.'

Ver. 48. **Ye therefore shall be perfect.** The first reference is to completeness in love to others; to an all embracing, instead of a nar-

CHAPTER 6: 1-18.

Contrast between the True and False Performance of great Religious Duties.

6: 1 TAKE heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven.

2 When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet, exclusive affection. But the highest virtue includes all the rest, since God is love. We may then accept the correctness of the ordinary view, which understood the verse as setting up our **heavenly Father** (lit., your Father, the heavenly one) as the ultimate standard of our morality and holiness. No other standard is allowable indeed. Even the rendering we adopt implies a command to attain this standard. Our ability cannot affect the case. 'Likeness to God in inward purity, love, and holiness, must be the continual aim and end of the Christian in all the departments of his moral life. But how far we are from having attained this likeness, St. Paul shows us (Phil. 3: 12), and every Christian feels just in the proportion in which he has striven after it.' (Alford.) Instruction in morality cannot rise above this verse. Christ alone can really give us such instruction, since He alone by life and death shows the perfection of God in man. Having thus led us up to our Heavenly Father as the true standard, our Lord, by a natural transition, speaks next of our religious duties, i. e., duties to our Heavenly Father.

Contrast between the True and False Performance of great Religious Duties, vers. 1-18.

CONTENTS. Our Lord passes from moral to religious duties, enjoining a 'righteousness' (ver. 1), which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees ('hypocrites'), and has regard to the character of our 'Father who is in heaven.' The three leading manifestations of practical piety among the Jews (as now in the Roman Church): *almsgiving* (vers. 2-4), *prayer* (vers. 5-15), and *fasting* (vers. 17-18), as performed by hypocrites and by the subjects of Christ's kingdom. The wrong end: 'to be seen of men,' the wrong method, 'before men,' the wrong reward, 'they have received' it. The right end, 'to glorify our heavenly Father' (chap. 5: 16): the right method, 'in secret; the right reward, that which our heavenly Father shall give.

Ver. 1. **Take heed.** Obedience to this precept difficult as well as important. Hiding from men only necessary to prevent the praise of men from becoming the motive.—**Righteousness.** Not 'alms.' This verse is a general statement, which is afterwards applied to particular duties.—**Else, ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.** The reward may (usually does) come from men (vers. 2, 5, 16), but not from God.

Vers. 2-4. **FIRST EXAMPLE** (*Almsgiving*).

Ver. 2. **Therefore,** in view of this general precept.—**Alms.** A

pet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.

Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

5 And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites:

contraction or corruption of the Greek word used by the Evangelist.—**Sound not a trumpet before thee**, etc. Figurative for self-laudation and display. Comp. our phrase, to make a flourish of trumpets, to be his own trumpeter. It would be impossible to blow a trumpet in the synagogues, where the alms were regularly collected, or even in the streets, where the giver would be accosted by the beggar, and hardly carry a trumpet with him for such casual occurrences. A trumpet was sounded before official personages to call attention to them.—**Hypocrites**. Men who feign virtues which they have not, and thus deceive others. In classical Greek: an actor who plays a part. The Pharisees are not named, but, as a class, deserved this epithet.—**They have received their reward**; already in full, and will get no more. They have the applause of men; the favor of God is denied by ver. 1. Their 'due' reward is not spoken of.

Ver. 3. It is not necessary to find symbolical meanings in the expressions: **left hand—right hand**; the verse is a figurative command to 'complete modesty, secret, noiseless giving' (Chrysostom).

Ver. 4. **That**, 'in order that.' The mode should be chosen with a view to secrecy.—**In secret**; more than 'secretly.' Literally 'in the hidden' (place).—**Thy Father who seeth in secret**, in this hidden place, who is ever and everywhere present.—'Himself' is probably to be omitted; if retained, it implies: without regard to the verdict of man.—**Shall recompense thee**. The terms differ from those applied to the hypocrites. The idea there is of 'hire'; the hypocrites have received that for which they worked; God gives this reward: 'of grace, not of works.'—'Openly' (O. V.) has but slight authority; it is literally: 'in the open' (place), i. e., in the greatest publicity, before men and angels at the last day. The position in which almsgiving is placed by our Lord, as well as chap. 5: 42, show that it is a Christian duty, which cannot be fully discharged only in person.

Vers. 5-15. SECOND EXAMPLE (*Prayer*).

Ver. 5. **But when ye pray**. The plural form is more correct. That men ought to pray is assumed. Prayerless men cannot consistently praise the Sermon on the Mount and the morality of Jesus of Nazareth. Religion is the backbone of morality; the second table presupposes the first: no love to man without love to God—**Ye shall**

for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their
6 reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth
7 in secret shall recompense thee. And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think

not be. This neither ought to be nor will be the case, if we are Christ's disciples.—**They love**, not to pray, but **to stand and pray**, etc., for the praise of men, resulting from the publicity of places they chose for their pretended devotions. It was right enough to pray in the usual posture, and the **synagogues** were proper places of devotion; but the standing was of a kind to attract attention. Not posture and place, but spirit and motive are condemned. Reference is had to the custom of offering private devotion in the synagogue (as in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican), and doing this with a view to attract the notice of the bystanders.—**In the corners of the streets**, or 'in the broad ways.' The word here used is not that found in ver. 2. The hypocrites would purposely be in such conspicuous places at the fixed hours of prayer and recite the prescribed eighteen acts of devotion with the *tallith* or veil of prayer over their head. In similar manner Mohammedans display their devotion in the street, on deck of ship, as well as in the mosque, and recite the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah. The fashion of airing piety in this or some other way has not died out and is found in all churches.

Ver. 6, shows the proper way, and the injunction is made more personal: **Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber.** Any little room in the interior or on the housetop used for such purposes. 'Thine' implies that the place is one where the person can secure privacy.—**Shut thy door.** This extends the idea of privacy and solitude. Private prayer, which is exclusively referred to here, is not to be performed in public places. The 'closet' may be sought and the door shut in a Pharisaical spirit; but this command is to be obeyed; if possible, literally, since our Lord's example (Matt. 14: 23; John 6: 15) teaches the importance of retirement. Actual solitude may be impossible, but even in the midst of a crowd we may be alone with God. How often the duty of secret prayer should be steadily performed is of course not mentioned. A prayerful spirit will multiply both opportunities and desires for the exercise; while prudence, not law, calls for stated times.

Ver. 7. The plural form is resumed, and continued throughout the Lord's prayer; this extends the application to public prayer.—**Use not vain repetitions.** (Lit., 'stutter, speak stammeringly'). All senseless and irrelevant expressions are included.—**The Gentiles**, i. e., the

's that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them : for ¹ your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which

¹ Some ancient authorities read *God your Father*.

individual Gentiles. Comp. the repetitions of the priests of Baal (1 Kings 18 : 26), of the mob at Ephesus (Acts 19 : 34). The same usage prevails largely among the adherents of all false religions, and even among Christians. There may be 'vain repetitions' of the Ave Maria, and of the Lord's Prayer, which immediately follows. Hence Luther calls it 'the greatest martyr.' The best prayers may become mere forms when the heart is absent. 'What is forbidden here is not *much* praying, not praying *in the same words* (the Lord did both); but the making number and length a *point of observance*' (Alford).—**For they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.** A second error; the first seeking to gain merit before men; this, attempting to gain merit before God. Prayer, not a magical charm, but a reasonable service. 'Much speaking' not much praying; 'vain repetition' of heathen origin; merely external worship leads to senseless and sinful worship.

Ver. 8. **Therefore**, because these things are heathen; the temptation to adopt or retain heathen worship will arise.—**For your Father**, etc. Another and more important reason for avoiding such practices. Our prayers do not tell 'our Father' of our needs, but simply confess our consciousness of them, and our trust that He can and will supply them. Both of these feelings must precede answer to prayer. Hence the reason holds good against vain repetitions, not against childlike petitions.

Vers. 9–13. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Ver. 9. **After this manner therefore.** Because vain repetitions are forbidden, a *pattern* or *specimen* of the true form of Christian prayer is given. Hence other prayers are not only allowed but required. Two forms of this prayer exist; see Luke 11 : 2–4. Hence it is very unlikely that it was in liturgical use when the Gospels were written. 'It must be supplemented for the same reason that the whole Sermon on the Mount requires supplementary teaching.' Yet opposition to the use of it in public prayer may be as really a species of formalism as too frequent liturgical repetition of it. It is a *form*, to be devoutly used on proper occasions, and a perfect *pattern* which could only proceed from the lips of the Son of God. There is little to prove that it was taken from forms of prayer already in use among the Jews. 'Lightfoot produces only the most general commonplace parallels from the Rabbinical books.' But the beauty of the Lord's Prayer is in its unity, symmetry, completeness, and pervading spirit.

As regards its contents in general, 'it embodies all essential desires of a praying heart. Yet in the simplest form, resembling in this respect a pearl on which the light of heaven plays. It expresses and

combines in the best order, *every Divine promise, every human sorrow and want, and every Christian aspiration* for the good of others.' It is generally arranged into three parts: the *preface* (address), the *petitions* (*seven*, according to Augustin, Luther, and others; *six*, according to Chrysostom, and the Reformed catechisms; 'deliver us from evil' being regarded as a distinct petition in the former enumeration), and the *conclusion* (doxology). The *address* puts us into the proper attitude of prayer—the filial relation to God as our 'Father' (a word of faith), the fraternal relation to our fellow men ('our,' a word of love), and our destination for 'heaven' (a word of hope). Every true prayer, an ascension of the soul to heaven, where God dwells in glory with all saints and where is our final home.—The *petitions* are naturally divided into two parts: the first, respecting the glory of God; the second, the wants of men. Hence 'thy' in the first, 'our' in the second. The first part presents a descending scale from God's name to the doing of His will on earth; the second, an ascending scale from 'daily bread' to final deliverance in glory. Within these two series of petitions there is a natural progress: the sanctification of God's name is the basis for the building up of God's kingdom, and God's kingdom is the sphere for the fulfilment of God's will; and again the preservation of the life of the body is the condition of the growth of the spiritual life which begins with the pardoning of the sinner, goes on in conflict with temptation and is completed in the final deliverance from all moral and physical evil. The whole prayer presupposes the revelation of God in Christ and the scheme of redemption from sin.—Meyer thus analyzes it: '*Having risen* to what forms the highest and holiest object of believers, the soul is engrossed with its character (first petition), its grand purpose (second, petition), and its moral condition (third petition); in the fourth petition the children of God *humble themselves* under the consciousness of their dependence upon Divine mercy even in temporal matters, but much more in spiritual things, since that which according to the first portion of this prayer, constituted the burden of desire, can only be realized by forgiveness (fifth petition), by gracious guidance (sixth petition), and deliverance from the power of the devil (seventh petition).' Tholuck remarks: 'The attentive reader, who has otherwise learned the doctrine of the Trinity, will find a distinct reference to it in the arrangement of this prayer. The first petition, in each of the first and second portions of the prayer, refers to God as the Creator and Preserver: the second to God the Redeemer, and the third to God the Holy Spirit.' To which Lange adds: '*Devotion* to God, and acceptance of His gifts are contrasted in the Lord's Prayer. 1. Devotion to His name, to His kingdom, and to His will. 2. Acceptance of His gifts in reference to the present, the past, and the future.' See Lange, *Matthew*, pp. 123-129.

Our Father who art in heaven, lit., 'Our Father, the (one) in the heavens.' The most endearing name under which God can be addressed, reminding us of His infinite love and exciting our filial trust. A form of address almost unknown and to a certain extent unwarranted

10 art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.
 11, 12 Give us this day ¹our daily bread.* And forgive

¹ Gr. *our bread for the coming day.*

* Let the marg. read, Gr. *our bread for the coming day, or our needful bread.* So in Luke 11: 3.—*Am. Com.*

before Christ came. He had repeatedly called God by this name in this discourse; now He teaches His disciples to call Him thus in a sense far deeper and more comprehensive than was possible in the O. T. where God is only the Father of Israel (Ex. 4: 22; Deut. 32: 6; Isa. 63: 16; 64: 7). A recognition of the new filial relation concerning which the Apostles have so much to say, and which is formed through and on Christ, who teaches this form of address. The added phrase, 'in the heavens,' shows 'the infinite difference between this and every other human relationship of a similar kind: He is no weak, helpless, earthly parent.' The plural 'heavens' expresses the grandeur and immensity of our heavenly Father's house, with its many mansions (John 14: 2) more fully than the singular (comp. 'the heaven of heavens,' Deut. 10: 14, etc.). The word 'our' implies at once our fellowship with Christ and with one another. The very preface to the Lord's Prayer is a denial of Atheism, Pantheism, and Deism, since it recognizes a God, a Personal God, who is our Father through Christ.—**Hallowed be thy name** (*first petition*). 'Hallowed' means made holy; in this case it can only mean recognized, treated as sacred and thus glorified. 'Thy name' is referred by many to the actual name of God, Jehovah, as including His self-existent and eternal being together with His covenant relation. By others to all by which He makes Himself known. In either view the hallowing can be accomplished only through Christ.—God's glory comes first in this model of prayer; the proper order. We in our weakness and need often put our desires first.

Ver. 10. **Thy kingdom come** (*second petition*). The Messiah's kingdom, which in organized form had not yet come, but was proclaimed by the Lord Himself, as at hand. It did speedily come, as opposed to the Old Testament theocracy; but in its fulness, including the triumph of Christ's kingdom over the kingdom of darkness, it has not yet come. For this coming we now pray, and the prayer is answered in part by every success of the gospel, and will be answered entirely when the King Himself comes again. A missionary petition, but not less a prayer for our own higher sanctification and for the second coming of Christ.—**Thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth** (*third petition*). This is the order of the Greek (followed by the O. V. in Luke 11: 2): the prayer begins in heaven and comes down to the earth. It sounds like a reminiscence of Christ's previous abode in the glory of the Father. It lifts our desires to our final home above. 'Heaven' and 'earth,' put for their inhabitants. As by pure angels, so by men. The idea of human doing is prominent, our will subordinate to God's will. 'As' expresses similarity in kind and completeness.

13 us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from ¹the

¹ Or, evil.

Ver. 11. **Give us this day our daily** (or, 'needful') **bread** (*fourth petition*). First of the second division relative to our wants. These are subordinate, but not opposed, to the subjects of the previous petitions. 'Bread,' food in general; the form in the Greek hints that it is 'ours,' i. e., created for our use; 'this day' shows that we are to pray daily and to ask neither for riches nor poverty, but, with contentment and thankfulness for the day's portion only. Comp. Prov. 30: 8. The word translated 'daily' (ἐπιούσιος) has occasioned much discussion, as it occurs only in the Lord's Prayer (here and Luke 11: 3), and was not current in colloquial Greek (Origen). Explanations (1) 'required for our (physical) wants,' 'needful'; this is more loosely expressed by 'daily'; (2) 'coming,' i. e., to-morrow's bread (Meyer and Lightfoot); this is not contrary to the context (ver. 34 forbids only anxiety, not prayer, for the future), but we do not need to-morrow's bread 'this day'; (3) Roman Catholics refer 'bread' to spiritual nourishment (the sacraments); but while this may be suggested, the primary sense must be that of actual bodily food. For a full discussion, see Lange, *Matthew*, pp. 121, 126, and Lightfoot, *Revision of the Eng. New Testament* (Appendix, pp. 195-242). The propriety of daily family prayer is suggested by this petition for our 'daily bread.'

Ver. 12. **And forgive us our debts**, etc. (*fifth petition*). 'Debts,' undoubtedly, moral obligations unfulfilled, i. e., *sins*. See ver. 14, which requires this sense.—**As we have forgiven**. The true reading is the perfect (ἀφῆκαμεν), which implies that we must have forgiven our debtors before we can ask forgiveness.* 'As,' i. e., 'in the same manner as;' not, 'to the same extent as,' nor 'because.' The spirit of forgiveness, which God implants, gives a better assurance of His forgiveness.—**Our debtors**, like 'debts,' is to be taken in the moral sense. We are sinners, always needing forgiveness; forgiveness and readiness to forgive cannot be separated, the latter being the evidence of the former. Unwillingness to forgive would make the petition hypocritical and useless.

Ver. 13. **And bring** ('lead') **us not into temptation** (*sixth petition*). The next clause is reckoned the *seventh* by many, more from a desire to find in the prayer the sacred number *seven* than from sound interpretation. We prefer to join the clauses. God cannot tempt us (Jas. i. 13), i. e., solicit us to evil, but 'temptation' means also a trial of our moral character; these trials are under God's control, and His Providence may lead us into them, may even *permit* us to be solicited by evil. God's agency in good is direct and effective; God's agency in evil is indirect and permissive. This petition asks to be preserved from all

* But in Luke 11: 3 all authorities read the present: 'for we forgive,' which gives as good sense and implies habit.

14 evil one.³ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your

³ Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

temptations to sin, and by implication, to be shown a way of escape. In view of the many temptations from within (our 'flesh'), from without (the 'world'), and from beneath (the 'devil'), to which we are constantly exposed, there is no help and safety for us, but in the personal trust in Christ which underlies the proper offering up of this petition. We should never seek temptation, but flee from it; or if we cannot avoid it, meet it with the weapon of prayer wielded in that faith which overcomes the world.—**But deliver us**, literally, pull out, draw to thyself.—**From the evil**, either from all evil, moral and physical, or **from the evil** (wicked) **one** (the devil), as the author of, and tempter to, all moral evil (4: 3). This goes to the root of the matter. The Greek admits the neuter as well as the masculine rendering, but the weight of N. T. usage is in favor of the latter (comp. 18: 19, 38; John 17: 15; Rom. 16: 20; 2 Thess. 3: 3; Eph. 6: 16; 1 John 2: 13, 14; 5: 18, 19). The Greek and the Reformed commentators take this view; while Augustin and Luther support the other. A higher petition than the fifth, implying that God alone can save us from the power of sin. Entire deliverance by God's grace from moral evil, or from the devil, is entire freedom from temptation, and looks towards that final redemption in heaven where all our wants shall be satisfied and our prayers, as petitions, be lost in never-ceasing thanksgiving and praise. The last petition is the highest step on the ladder of prayer which reaches from earth to heaven.

Conclusion or doxology. Wanting in the oldest copies and Latin versions, and the oldest explanations of the Lord's Prayer (by Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, in the third century), though found in the Syriac Peshitto (probably a later insertion even there). The insertion can be more easily accounted for (from liturgical usage) than its omission. The Lord's Prayer was early used in private and public devotion with a doxology (after the Jewish custom, comp. 1 Chr. 29: 11); and this was inserted first on the margin, then in the text. It is certainly very ancient, and appropriate; hence it need not be omitted in using the Prayer, though it must be excluded from the text or put on the margin. (It is omitted in the Roman, retained in the Greek and Protestant usage.)—**For**, 'we ask all this of Thee because,' **thine**, by right and possession, **is the kingdom**, the blessed domain for which we pray, **and the power**, omnipotence, ability to answer, **and the glory**, the glory prayed for in the first petition, which is the end of all our petitions.—**Forever**, as the unchangeable God. Thus the eternal fulness of God forms the *basis*, the *soul*, and the *aim* of the whole prayer.—**Amen**.—The word translated, 'verily,' when used at the beginning of a sentence. At the close of a prayer it expresses the assent of the worshippers to the prayer uttered by another. Jewish and early Christian usage sanction the audible 'Amen' by the congregation.

- 15 heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- 16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that
- 17 they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when

Vers. 14, 15. These verses explain the fifth petition (ver. 12), substituting the word 'trespass' for 'debt,' as some liturgies do in the Lord's Prayer itself. In 'debt' the notion of obligation is prominent, in 'trespass' that of misstep, falling away from what is right. The adoption of this explanation shows that forgiveness and readiness to forgive were among the leading ideas of the prayer. They are *distinctively Christian* ideas. The people were not prepared to learn the true ground of forgiveness, the redeeming work of Christ, but the principle could be laid down. No man is forgiven of God who has not received with the forgiveness of his own sins the spirit of forgiveness toward others. It is impossible that we should be forgiven, *because we forgive others*, for none can do this until forgiven of God for Christ's sake. Because He is our forgiving 'Father,' He will not brook an unforgiving spirit in us. 'Repentance is the condition of being forgiven, and the temper that does not forgive is *ipso facto* incompatible with the temper of the penitent. As if for greater emphasis, the truth is presented both in its positive and negative aspects' (Plumptre).

Vers. 16-18. THIRD EXAMPLE (*Fasting*).

Ver. 16. **When ye fast.** Fasting as an aid to prayer and meditation, and a wholesome discipline, is a religious duty and privilege, and has a place in Christian practice. More is meant than temperance in meat and drink. Stated fasts are likely to become formal; public fasts are almost sure to become Pharisaical, but there are circumstances in the life of every Christian which make days of private abstinence appropriate. The wrong, hypocritical way of fasting is first mentioned.—**Of a sad countenance**, not sorrowful, but sullen, morose, as is explained further by what follows.—**For they disfigure their faces.** They left their beards and faces uncleaned, attired themselves negligently, with a purpose in view, viz., **that they may be seen of men to fast**, or, that they may appear unto men, fasting. They did really fast, but they wished men to see them as they fasted. There is a play upon the words in the Greek: They make their faces *unappearable* ('disfigure'), that they may *appear* unto men fasting. They obtain their wish, **have received their reward**, the hire for which they do such things. There is nothing more for them to look for.

Ver. 17. **When thou fastest.** Christ assumes that His disciples would practice private fasting.—**Ancient thy head and wash thy face.** The usual practice before meals, especially before feasts. Spe-

18 thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

CHAPTER 6: 19-34.

Instruction regarding Dedication of the Heart to God; its Importance enforced, and its Exercise illustrated.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves

cial preparation would involve hypocrisy also. The meaning is, perform the cleansing usual and proper before meals, even when fasting. The maxim of sound piety, 'cleanliness next to godliness.' Hypocrisy and false asceticism reverse the maxim.

Ver. 18. **That thou appear not**, etc. The usual preparations would leave men unaware that the disciple was fasting, but God, with reference to whom all these duties are performed, sees and rewards. Comp. vs. 4, 6.

Instruction regarding Dedication of the Heart to God; its Importance enforced, and its Exercise illustrated, vers. 19-34.

CONNECTION AND CONTENTS. The external connection seems to be between 'they have received their reward,' which closes each of the foregoing examples of false piety, and 'lay not up for yourselves treasures' (ver. 19). Main idea: supreme dedication to God; this is illustrated and applied in various ways. The connection of thought, then, is: not only are moral and religious duties to be performed for God and with a view to His blessing, in reliance on His blessing, but our whole life is for God and through His blessing. 'In all our aims and undertakings the mind should be set on the things of eternity.' Hence vers. 19-21 teach that our treasures should be laid up in heaven, where our heart should be; vers. 22-24 enforce the duty of devoting our heart to God by two illustrations: vers. 25-32 apply this principle to earthly wants; ver. 33 states the principle plainly, while ver. 34 deduces from it the prohibition of anxious care for the future. The last verse returns, as it were, to the starting point, since anxious care for the morrow leads to heaping up of treasures on earth.

Ver. 19. **Lay not up for yourselves treasures**, literally, 'treasure not for yourselves treasures.'—**Upon the earth**. This qualifies 'lay not up,' rather than 'treasures.' Earthly treasures are not forbidden in themselves, but the earthly storing up, the earthly desire manifesting itself in the common striving after wealth. It is no sin to *be* rich; but it is a sin to *love* riches, which the poorest may do; while the rich man may glorify God and benefit man by his wealth.—**Where moth and rust doth** (better, 'do') **consume**. 'Moth;' in oriental countries, treasures of clothing were laid up. Comp. Jas. 5: 2: 'Your garments are moth-eaten.' The Greek word translated 'rust' means, literally, 'eating,' 'consumption,' referring here to the 'wear and tear' of time, which consumes our possessions. 'Consume' is better than 'corrupt.'—**Thieves break through** (lit., 'dig

20 ¹break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not ²break through nor
21 steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart
22 be also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full

¹ Gr. *dig through*.

² Or, *dig*.

through') and steal. The term 'thieves' is quite general. Robbers in the East often break through the walls of mud or unburnt brick common in those regions.

Ver. 20. A positive precept, answering exactly to the negative one of the last verse: **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.** 'Heaven' sometimes means the atmospheric heaven (ver. 26), sometimes the starry heavens (Heb. 11: 12); here it is used in the highest and spiritual sense of the unknown region where God has His throne and reveals His glory (comp. vers. 9, 10). This is the 'place' where the treasures are laid up; the 'character' of the treasures is, therefore, eternal; they are to be collected in a heavenly 'manner.' Hence the reference is not exclusively to a future locality; nor is there a thought of purchasing a future and heavenly reward by laying up a store of good works. The superiority of these treasures is more prominent than the way to lay them up. The treasures are good works or rather the moral character formed by them which does not decay, but follows us into the better world.

Ver. 21. **For.** A reason for the preceding precepts (vers. 19, 20). **Where thy treasure is, whether on earth or in heaven, there will thy heart be also.** The singular pronoun adds impressiveness. Not a question of mere profit and loss, but of affection and of character. The precepts are for those who hope to become subjects of the kingdom of heaven. Such must have their heart in heaven, hence they must lay up their treasures there. The dedication of the heart to God is the underlying thought on which the particular teachings are based. May be used in support of the voluntary principle. People take more interest in the Church, if they sustain it by purse and personal effort.

Ver. 22. Not an abrupt transition, but an illustration of the importance of dedicating the heart to God supremely.—**The lamp** (the same word used in chap. 5: 15, but different from that rendered 'light' at the close of this verse, and in ver. 23) **of the body is the eye.** Comp. Prov. 20: 27, 'The spirit of man is the candle (lamp) of the Lord.' The eye gives light which it receives from without, and is not light itself, so the conscience lights the spirit by light from above.—**Single**, i. e., presenting a single, clear image. The application is to single apprehension of God as the supreme object of trust and love.—**Full of light**, or, 'in light,' 'in full light,' the body having received what the eye was designed to convey.

- 23 of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!
- 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other: or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and

Ver. 23. If thine eye be evil, 'double,' distorted in vision.—**Full of darkness**, or, 'in darkness.' (The word is not the same as that in the next clause, but derived from it.) The evil result of a divided state of heart, where what God designed to be the means of showing Himself to us as the supreme object of love, fails to perform its office. The rest of the clause carries out the same thought.—If **therefore**, since so much depends on the singleness of vision, **the light that is in thee**, what God has placed in us to be the means of conveying light, referring it to the conscience. Man can lose the proper use of what God designed to be the organ of spiritual light; even this may be **darkness**. In such a case, **how great is that darkness!** A fearful picture of a confirmed sinful condition; and it is implied that a heart without single and supreme dedication reaches such a condition.—Another view: 'If then the *light* which is in thee is darkness, how dark must the *darkness* be!' i. e., 'if the *conscience*, the eye and *light* of the soul, be darkened, in how much *grosser* darkness will all the passions and faculties be, which are of themselves naturally *dark*!' No blindness is so terrible as blindness of conscience, when what was made to enlighten us but increases our darkness.

Ver. 24. A still plainer illustration, to prove that man cannot be thus divided, but must be *one*, light or dark, servant of God or of Mammon.—**Serve**, i. e., be the slave of, yielding entire obedience. A hired servant might faithfully serve two masters; but such service is not meant here.—**For either he will hate the one**, etc. Explanations: (1) The suppositions the reverse of each other, with no particular difference between the two sets of verbs: 'He will either hate A and love B, or cleave to A and despise B.' (2) The second clause less strong than the first, the reference being to the proper master and a usurper; the servant may hate the proper master, and love the usurper, or if he love the former, cleave to him, and despise the latter. The proper master (God) may be loved or hated, but cannot be despised. Hence in any case 'one' in the latter clause must be God.—**Ye cannot serve God and mammon**. This is the direct application. The Chaldee word 'Mammon' means money or riches (Luke 16: 9). It is here personified as an idol, like the Plutus of the Greeks, who worshipped the god of wealth. 'Mammon' originally meant 'trust' or confidence, and riches are the trust of worldly men. If God be not the object of supreme trust, something else will be, and it is most likely to be money. We must choose. Not the possession of money, but its mastery over the mind, is condemned.

25 mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the
26 raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye
27 of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto his ¹ stature*?

¹ Or, *age*. * For 'his stature' read 'the measure of his life' (with marg. Or, *his stature*). So in Luke 12: 25.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 25. **Therefore.** Because of the precept just given. Anxiety, which is distrust of God, is the source of avarice. Living to God is the proper life, and it relieves from care, because we trust Him for what we need. This thought is expanded in the remainder of the chapter.—**Be not anxious.** The Greek word means: 'to be distracted,' 'to have the mind drawn two ways.' Ordinary thought or care is not forbidden (comp. 1 Tim. 5: 8; 2 Thess. 3: 10), yet there is little danger of its being understood too literally. When thought about temporal things becomes anxiety, it has become distrust of God.—**Your life.** The word here used means 'soul' as the seat of physical life. Hence the needs of this life are spoken of, **what ye shall eat**, etc. The **body** too has the same needs; but clothing is more properly connected with it here: **what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food?** '*The food*' of all kinds needed to sustain it. An argument *a fortiori*. Is not He who gave 'the life' able and willing to give what will sustain it, and He who made 'the body,' what will protect it.

Ver. 26. **Behold**, look attentively.—**The birds of the heaven**, the sky, the atmospheric heaven. This expresses the wild freedom above the earth which contains their food, and also their lower rank in the scale of creation.—**That.** Not 'for.' We are to behold with respect to the birds this fact, that **they sow not**, etc. Do not use the means which we all ought to use.—**Barns**, any kind of storehouse.—**And**, not 'yet;' you are to consider this fact also, that **your heavenly Father**, standing in a higher relation to you than to them, **feedeth them.**—**Are not ye of much more value than they?** This conclusive argument shows that ver. 25 must be designed to forbid our numerous earthly cares.

Ver. 27. **Add one cubit unto his age**, prolong his life in the least. 'Age' (*Am. Com.*) is preferable to 'stature' (*Engl. Com.*), although the word has both meanings; the reference is not to the body, but to the life; further, to add a cubit (eighteen inches) to the stature would be a very great thing. Our life is conceived of as a race

28 And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil
 29 not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like
 30 one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of

or journey. We speak of 'the space of time' and 'length of life.' If, then, we cannot do what is least by our care, why be anxious?

Ver. 28. **For raiment.** The second thought in ver. 25 is now expanded and illustrated; not only anxiety, but the common and childish vanity about raiment, is reproved.—**Consider, i. e.,** study, observe closely; more readily done in the case of the plants than in that of the birds. Another significant example of Christ's love of nature.—**The lilies of the field, i. e.,** wild lilies, growing without human care. The words 'grass of the field' (ver. 30) lead us to suppose that wild flowers in general are meant. Many, however, because of the reference to the pomp of Solomon, suppose the Huleh lily is specially referred to: 'it is very large, and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory' (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*). This flower was common in the neighborhood of Nazareth.—**How they grow.** So beautifully, luxuriantly, without human care.—**They toil not, neither do they spin;** perform no labor in preparing clothing.

Ver. 29. **Even Solomon.** The magnificence of his court is still proverbial through the East. To the Jew he was the highest representative of human glory.—**Like one of these.** 'One' is emphatic. The meanest of God's creatures exceed in glory the highest earthly pomp. Vanity about such things is therefore the height of folly. Another lesson is hidden beneath the text, 'As the beauty of the flower is unfolded by the Divine Creator-Spirit from *within*, from the laws and capacities of its *own* individual life, so must all true adornment of man be unfolded from *within* by the same Almighty Spirit.' (Alford.)

Ver. 30. **But if God doth so clothe.** 'If' does not imply doubt. The direct creative purpose and act of God is here assumed. Secondary causes are not excluded; science stops with the laws of nature, religion looks beyond to nature's God, the Maker of laws.—**The grass of the field.** Wild flowers belong to the herbage, which is cut down. It withers rapidly and is then fit for fuel, being **cast into the oven**, its beauty gone, even its substance consumed.—**Much more.** He who adorns the transient wild flower, so that human pomp is mean in comparison, will most assuredly provide for His children, whose being is not for a day, but forever.—**O ye of little faith,** little faith about what is least, when He has given us the greatest gift, in

31 little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-
 32 withal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father
 33 knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But
 34 seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and giving Him who thus teaches us. He joins His lessons of trust to what we see every day, and we need them every day.

Ver. 31. **Therefore.** The logic is so conclusive, even those of little faith might learn the lesson. It is not learned, if we are **anxious, saying, What shall we eat,** etc. Too few have faith enough to interpret this verse correctly.

Ver. 32. **For.** A reason against this anxious thought is now given. The parenthesis is unnecessary.—**After all these things do the Gentiles seek.** Worldliness and distrust are heathenish. The Pharisees, boasting of freedom from Gentile influence, were guilty of such distrust. Worldly men are quick to mock at the childlike trust in God here commanded.—**For.** This introduces an additional reason, yet one related to the other. Heathen, unbelievers in God's Providence, may act in this forbidden manner. Do not resemble them, *for you believe that you have a heavenly Father and He knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* He does not forbid your wants, but supplies them.

Ver. 33. **But seek ye first.** No 'secondly' is implied, as though we might be avaricious, after we have attended to the duties of religion. The first object is supreme. This positive command is needed, for we can avoid such anxious thought, only when we have some better object.—**His kingdom,** i. e., 'your heavenly Father's' (ver. 32). The common reading is an alteration for explanation. Supreme dedication to a Personal Object of trust and desire, who is our Father for Christ's sake, is here commanded.—**His righteousness.** The spiritual purity spoken of throughout. Not 'justification,' which this word does not mean, however true it is that we obtain God's righteousness through 'justification.' This verse, which contains the crowning thought of this chapter, echoes the crowning thought of the whole discourse (chap. 5: 48).—**All these things,** these things needed for the body.—**Shall be added unto you,** over and above the spiritual blessings, which result from seeking God as the supreme object. We are to ask God for temporal things. Christian prayer implies intimate and constant approach to God, which would be impossible if we could not tell Him all our real needs. To ask for them unconditionally, or to allow them to crowd our spiritual desires and affections, is certainly forbidden. One of the traditional sayings of Jesus quoted by Clement and Origen is: 'Ask great things, little things shall be added to you; ask heavenly things, and earthly things shall be added to you.'

Ver. 34. **Therefore.** Either: a further deduction; or a summing

all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

CHAPTER 7: 1-12.

Warning against Censoriousness; a Declaration of God's Willingness to give, introducing the Golden Rule of Conduct toward others.

7 Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what

up. The first view accords better with the reason given and would presuppose the other lessons; the latter is favored by the position of the verse immediately after the general precept of ver. 33, and finds a place more easily in a logical analysis of the discourse.—**The morrow** is here personified.—**For the morrow will be anxious for itself.** Not 'take care of itself,' but 'bring its own cares and anxieties,' do not foolishly increase these of to-day by borrowing from the morrow. 'No precept of divine wisdom has found so many echoes in the wisdom of the world. Epicurean self-indulgence, stoic apathy, practical common sense have all preached the same lesson, and bidden men to cease their questionings about the future' (Plumptre). But the carelessness of the Christian rests on serene faith in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God.—**Sufficient unto the day**, (or, for the day), **is the evil thereof.** 'Evil' (*κακία*) may mean natural or moral evil. The latter sense is the more usual one, the former suits the context better. Perhaps both may be included. Each day brings its trouble and temptation from the evil world, but also its own help and deliverance from our heavenly Father.

Warning against Censoriousness; a Declaration of God's Willingness to give, introducing the Golden Rule of Conduct toward others. 1-12.

CONNECTION AND CONTENTS. The connection is not obvious; no theory can be insisted upon. Various views: (1) No connection intended. (2) Ver. 7 is connected with the last chapter, while vers. 1-6 were addressed directly to the Pharisees (who were showing signs of dissent), ver. 6 to the disciples in regard to the Pharisees. Conjectural. (3) A contrast (so Lange): Be not surcharged with worldly cares for the morrow, but rather be filled with spiritual anxiety for the day of judgment. (4) Vers. 1-12, grouped as a whole, referring to conduct toward our fellow men. The line of thought, then, is: In this evil world (6: 34) where there is so much to provoke censoriousness, do not indulge in it, since it exposes you to judgment (vers. 1, 2); the folly and hypocrisy of it is shown by an illustration (vers. 3-5); the extreme of laxity is quite as foolish (ver. 6); remember, however, God's kind and wise dealings (vers. 7-11), and act thus kindly and wisely to others (ver. 12), without censoriousness on the one hand, or casting pearls before swine on the other.

Ver. 1. Judge not. This refers to harsh, unkind judgment, not

judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what
 3 measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And
 why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's
 eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own
 4 eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me
 cast out the mote out of thine eye ; and lo, the beam is
 5 in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the

to the mere formation of private opinion, or to judicial sentences.—Universally applicable to human nature, especially to the Jews, chiefly to the Pharisees. Comp. Rom. 2 : 3 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 5 ; Jas. 4 : 11. 'In proportion as any nation, any church, any society, any individual rises above the common forms of evil that surround them, they are disposed to sit in judgment on those who are still in the evil.'—**That ye be not judged**, not by other men, but by God. His judgment is more strict, and it takes special account of this harsh censorious spirit.

Ver. 2. **For with what judgment**, etc. Literally, 'in what judgment;' the 'measure' according to which God's judgment will take place, namely, our own severe judgment. The second clause repeats the same idea, making it more general.

Vers. 3-5. A figurative application of the principle just laid down, showing the folly of sinners being censorious, their incapacity for forming a right judgment of others, hinting at the proportionate magnitude which our own faults and those of others should hold in our estimation. Those who have the sharpest eye for the faults of others are often most blind to their own faults.

Ver. 3. **And**, since the principle of ver. 2 is correct, **Why beholdest thou?** The verb means to observe, to voluntarily stare at ; the context shows that the one addressed could not have clear vision ; the question indicates that such observing was unnecessary. The singular 'thou' is pointed, too much so for a direct address to the Pharisees present.—**The mote**, or splinter: the foreign substance in the eye is of the same kind in both cases.—**Considerest not**, 'apprehendest not.' Stronger word than 'beholdest.'—**The beam**, a hyperbolic expression for a great fault, to show the relative magnitude. No reference to one class of sins. The 'mote' which might be overlooked is looked for, the 'beam' of which one must be conscious is not considered.

Ver. 4. **Or how wilt thou say**, have the face to say. A step in folly beyond that represented in the last verse.—**Let me cast out** (as in ver. 5) ; 'permit me (*ἄφες*), I will cast out.' The friendly language presents the censoriousness as hypocritical. True to nature ! The epithet of ver. 5 is not abruptly introduced.

Ver. 5. **Thou hypocrite**. Not necessarily the Pharisees, but any who thus act. Such action is hypocrisy before God and before the conscience also.—**First**, before meddling with others.—**And then**

beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

- 6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.

shalt thou see clearly. 'See' differs from 'behold' (ver. 8). The look must be purified before it can be used for this end; one must have got rid of great faults before he can see 'clearly' enough to help his brother get rid of his faults. To get clearness of vision ourselves is the great end; caution is necessary in helping the brother.

Ver. 6. If the preceding verses were addressed to the opposing Pharisees, our Lord now turns to the disciples. Harsh judgment and unwise correction of others were reprov'd (vers. 1-5); now comes a warning against laxity of judgment, childish ignorance of men. The two extremes often meet. The latter, no less than censoriousness, is an unwise attempt at the correction of others, and will be avoided by those who 'see clearly.'—**Give not that which is holy, i. e., the sacrificial meat, the provision of the priests, unto (the) dogs.** These, regarded as specially unclean in the East, will receive it, but such giving will be a desecration. The definite article here in Greek is generic, and ought to be omitted in the English.—**Neither cast ye your pearls before (the) swine.** Still more foolish; 'the swine' will not receive the 'pearls,' which are of no value to them, as they cannot eat them. A resemblance between pearls and the natural food of swine need not be assumed; the reference is to what is most precious. Pearls, the costliest of jewels, are symbols of the most sacred truths. Dogs and swine were both unclean, the former probably represent what is low, unclean, heretical; the latter what is hostile, stubborn, and savage. Eastern dogs are more disgusting than ours, and eastern swine more savage. The rest of the verse applies only to the savage swine.—**Lest they trample them under their feet.** The pollution, not the destruction, of the precious things is represented.—**And turn and rend you,** turning from the precious pearls, or, turning upon you. The main reason urged is the defilement of what is precious; but the other danger follows. 'Even saving truth must be withheld from those who would surely reject it with contempt and savage hatred' (J. A. Alexander). Lange: 'The dogs ultimately become swine, just as that which is holy is further designated as pearls, and the iniquity of the first action passes into the madness of the second. At last the full consequences appear, when the swine turn from the gift to the giver and rend the profane sinners.' No encouragement, however, either to 'cowardly suppression of the truth,' or revenge against its rejectors. The Crusaders and others drew the latter inference. Pharisaism does not 'cast out the beam,' but often 'casts away the pearls.'

7 Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall
 8 find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for
 every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh
 findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
 9 Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask
 10 him for a loaf, will give him a stone ; or if he shall
 11 ask for a fish, will give him a serpent ? If ye then, be-
 ing evil, know how to give good gifts unto your chil-
 dren, how much more shall your Father which is in

Ver. 7. The thoughts of judgment and unworthiness (ver. 1-6) might discourage ; encouragement is given by showing God's willingness to give.—**Ask, and it shall be given to you**, etc. 'Ask,' 'seek,' 'knock,' refer to prayer, forming a climax. The first implies simple petition, the second earnest desire, the third perseverance. 'To ask,' indicates the *want* of an object, which can only be obtained by free gift ; to *seek*, that it has been *lost* ; to *knock*, that it has been shut up—hence this prayer, which is both the work of life and the evidence of life.' Others apply 'ask' to prayer, 'seek' to our endeavors, 'knock' to our investigation of the Scripture ; the former explanation is simpler.

Ver. 8. **For every one that asketh**, etc. An invariable rule ; a plain promise, not for the future, but for the present, since our Lord says : **receiveth,—findeth,—it shall be opened**. This promise, several times repeated by our Lord, is limited only by the verses which follow ; comp., however, James 4 : 3, 'Ye ask and receive not ; because ye ask amiss.' God always answers the right kind of prayer, but in His own way, and at His own time.

Ver. 9. **Or**, to view the matter in another light, comparing God's willingness with that of a human father.—**What man is there of you**, more exactly, 'who is there among you, a man,' a mere man.—**Give him a stone**. The loaves or cakes used in the East resembled somewhat a smooth, flat, round stone. A deceptive answer is meant.

Ver. 10. **A serpent**. A response both deceptive and hurtful. We often deem the bread a stone, and the fish a serpent, misunderstanding God's good gifts.

Ver. 11. **If ye then, being evil**. An argument from the less to the greater ; 'if,' equivalent to 'since.' An incidental proof of hereditary sin and general depravity, but also of good elements remaining, such as humanity and parental affection.—**Good gifts to your children**. This is the rule.—**How much more**. The difference is infinite.—**Your Father who is in heaven**. He was to be thus addressed in prayer (chap. 5 : 9) ; real prayer is based on this relation.—**Good things**. Luke 11 : 13, 'the Holy Spirit,' which is the best of the 'good things ;' he who receives the Holy Spirit may expect all the rest, as far as 'good' for Him. God gives good gifts only, and

12 heaven give good things to them that ask him? All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets.

CHAPTER 7: 13-29.

The Conclusion of the Discourse; the Effect upon the People.

13 Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide¹ is the gate,

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *is the gate*.

what He gives is always good.—**To them that ask him.** Prayer is the condition which God appoints; hence trust and prayer help each other, in fact coincide.

Ver. 12. **Therefore.** An inference from vers. 1-11, summing up the duties to others: not censoriousness, nor laxity, but giving like God's; as He gives good things to those asking Him, even so give to others what you would have them do. The precept is the counterpart of the promise. The correspondence between our acts and God's, a warning in ver. 1, becomes a precept, after the promise of His kind dealings. An echo of chap. 5: 48, the *culminating* precept of the discourse; hence a fitting close to this section.—**Even so do ye also to them.** Not, 'do these things,' as the order of the common version suggests; but, 'after this manner do ye also.' Not, do to others what we would have them do to us (this might become mere barter); but, do to them what we think they would wish to have done to them. The rule must be limited to that which is really good; for reciprocity in evil or foolish desires would be contrary to the mind of Christ.—**For this is the law and the prophets.** This golden rule is equivalent to 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' but joined with the example of God's giving, which implies supreme gratitude to Him, it is equivalent to the whole law. Comp. chap. 5: 17, which introduced the moral precepts of the discourse.—The Golden Rule, though not without parallels in rabbinical and heathen ethics (in a negative form), is distinctively Christian. (1) It presents God's benevolence as the guide of duty. (2) Hence it is positive (Do all the good you can to your neighbor), not negative (as the sentence of Rabbi Hillel; 'Do not to your neighbor what is odious to you, for this is the whole law'). (8) It is taught by One who wrought as well as taught 'righteousness,' who died that we might 'even so do also.' The powerless teacher of correct ethics makes our case the more hopeless (comp. Rom. 8: 19; 7: 7-14); but Christ is 'the Power of God,' as well as 'the Wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1: 24).

The Conclusion of the Discourse; the Effect upon the People, vers. 13-29.

CONNECTION AND CONTENTS. The exposition of the requirements of 'the law and the prophets' just given, was far beyond the low morality of the scribes and Pharisees, and

and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and
 14 many be they that enter in thereby. ¹ For narrow is
 the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life,
 and few be they that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in

¹ Many ancient authorities read *How narrow is the gate, &c.*

men might easily be tempted by their own hearts or by others to seek the easier way. Our Lord therefore concludes by urging His hearers to avoid the broad way and seek the narrow one marked out (vers. 13, 14), warns them against hypocritical teachers (vers. 15-20), against self-deception (vers. 21-23), and closes with two similitudes respecting those who obey and disobey His precepts (vers. 24-27); vers. 28, 29, tell the impression produced by the discourse.—Contrasts: the narrow and wide gates; the straitened and broad ways; the good and corrupt trees, with their fruit; saying and doing; active in Christ's name, yet working iniquity; the rock and the sand; the standing the storm and the falling in the storm; teaching with authority and teaching as their scribes.

Ver. 13. **Enter ye in by, or through, the narrow gate.** The 'gate' is mentioned first; the way afterwards. It is the entrance gate at the beginning of the journey of life (the way), not the gate of heaven at the close. Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' is the best commentary on all such figures. Explanations: Repentance, faith, humility, self-denial, poverty in spirit (ver. 8), the righteousness of Christ; the last is probably the best sense, in contrast with the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (the wide gate). In the deepest sense Christ Himself is the 'door' (John 10: 7) and the 'way' (14: 6).—**For wide is the gate, and broad the way,** etc. More attractive, more easy to find, and to follow. A reason ('for') why we must be exhorted to enter in by the narrow gate. To follow our natural tendencies is to pursue the broad way.—**Destruction.** The way leads to this; in one sense it is this already. Carnal Judaism led to the destruction of Jerusalem. Carnal Christianity passes on to similar judgment. But destruction does not exclude salvation; the lost sheep was found; the prodigal son who wasted his substance, returned to his father's house.

Ver. 14. **Straitened** (lit., 'pressed together') **is the way.** Even after we pass through the gate the Christian course continues difficult, is a constant conflict and self-denial, but it **leadeth unto life.** Eternal life which begins in this world, but is obtained in its fullness in eternity. This profound idea of life as the summing up of all the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven, is most fully developed in the writings of John.—**Few are they that find the straitened way.** It is not even discovered by most, much less entered upon. This not because God has made it so 'strait,' but because so few desire to find it.

Ver. 15. **Beware of false prophets, i. e., teachers.** Not only is the way straitened, but those who might leave the 'many' to find it are in danger from false teachers, such as would prevent them from

sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves.
 16 By their fruits ye shall know them. Do *men* gather
 17 grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every
 good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt
 18 tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot
 bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring
 19 forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth

finding it. The warning may refer to the false teachers shortly to arise from among the Jews, but applies to all.—**That come to you.** 'False prophets' are defined as those who do thus. They come 'to you,' to the professed disciples of Christ; more anxious to proselyte and pervert in the Church than to convert in the world, more meddlesome than missionary in their activity.—**In sheep's clothing.** No allusion to the dress of the prophets, but referring to the harmless exterior, or to the external connection with God's flock.—**Inwardly,** or from within, acting according to their impulses, they are **ravening wolves.** The old destructive malice remains. The application of this strong (but not harsh) language to persons must be governed by what follows.

Ver. 16. **By their fruits ye shall know them.** This order is more emphatic. This common figure is carried out in detail in vers. 17-19.—**Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?** The fruits most highly prized in the East. From teachers we are to look for valuable fruit; but false teachers can only bear after their kind (vers. 17, 18), they are 'thorns' and 'thistles.' The productions of the bushes here named are said to resemble slightly the fruits spoken of in each case; the harsh spirit of the false teachers has been compared to the sharpness of the thorns, and their proselyting spirit to the adhesive quality of the thistle. The main point is, however, the impossibility of getting good fruit from 'fruitless and forbidding plants.'

Ver. 17. The general law of nature is here laid down positively: As the tree, so is the fruit. The principle holds good in the moral world.

Ver. 18 repeats the same truth, asserting the impossibility of its being otherwise. But while ver. 16 refers to kinds of plants, these verses speak of individual trees.—**A good tree, i. e.,** of a good nature for bearing fruit.—**Good fruit,** of a good kind.—**A corrupt tree,** literally, 'spoiled,' but meaning here of a bad quality; **evil fruit,** of a bad kind like the tree. Our Lord applies the general law to men's actions and their moral results; these are but manifestations of a moral nature, depraved or sanctified.

Ver. 19. The figure is carried further to show the awful destiny of the false teachers.—**Every tree,** irrespective of its kind in this case, **that bringeth not forth good fruit,** is entirely barren. All is here made dependent on the fruitfulness.—**Is hewn down and cast into the fire.** Such trees can only be used for fuel. The same

20 good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every
 21 one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of
 22 my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me

language was used by John the Baptist (8: 10) in a wider application, which holds good still.

Ver. 20. **Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.** Resumption of the thought of ver. 16, which has been further illustrated. 'Fruits,' their influence, the moral effect of their teaching. Their acts may be included, and also the influence exerted upon the doctrinal belief of others; not their own doctrines, however, which form the tree in a certain sense. The main test in the case of teachers is their influence upon the lives of others.

Ver. 21. A natural transition from false teachers to false profession and self-deception.—**Not every one.** The really pious profess Christ, but not all who profess are really pious. This answers a common objection urged against public profession from the number of hypocrites.—**Lord, Lord,** the repetition is emphatic. This word, probably already used by the disciples, is the germ of a Christian confession, centring in the acknowledgment of personal allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. Such acknowledgment in word (or subscription to an orthodox creed) is not enough for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.—**But he that doeth,** etc. Of all who thus confess, only those doing the will of God shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. The contrast is not between hypocritical professors and holy non-professors, but between hypocrites and saints, all making the same outward profession.—**My Father.** The whole Gospel shows that this means a closer relation than that expressed by the phrases, 'your Father,' 'our Father.' Christ, the only begotten Son, always addresses God as 'Father,' or 'My Father.' We have no right thus to monopolize the fatherhood of God; hence we are directed to pray, 'Our Father.'

Ver. 22. **Many.** The number of 'false teachers' is large, much more than that of hypocrites.—**In that day.** 'The great day of the Lord;' whether it be one day of account for all, or the particular day for each.—**Lord, Lord.** The confession (ver. 21) now becomes a cry for help.—**Did we not prophesy,** or preach. If those seeming to do much in Christ's name are cast out, much more will others be.—**By thy name, i. e.,** called by Thy name, and prophesying by the authority of Thy name.—**Cast out demons** (Engl. Com. 'devils'); the greatest exercise of healing power.—**Mighty works.** The word usually means 'miracles.' Judged by external results hypocrites may appear successful in spiritual works; such may have shared in the miraculous power of the early Church. Their self-deception continues to the very bar of final judgment.

in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out ¹devils, and by thy
 23 name do many ²mighty works? And then will I
 profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from
 24 me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore which
 heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall
 be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon
 25 the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came,
 and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it

¹ Gr. *demons*.

² Gr. *powers*.

Ver. 23. **And then, at once, will I profess unto them.** They make false professions, but 'I will tell them the plain truth.'—**I never knew you.** They had never been called by Christ, though called by His name. Intimate knowledge of persons implies sympathy and similarity.—**Depart from me** (comp. chap. 25: 41), **ye that work iniquity.** The seeming success of a hypocrite is habitual and heightened iniquity. Important for self-examination. Our Lord speaks of confessing Him, of works done in His name, His final verdict, all in connection with doing the will of His Father. No mere man could speak thus.

Ver. 24. **Therefore.** In view of all that precedes, especially the warnings just given, to which a further warning is here added.—**These words of mine,** coming from me, with a hint as to His authority. This expression does not favor the view that this discourse is a summary made by the Evangelist.—**Doeth them,** makes them his habitual rule of action. The power to do them Christ gives us. How and why is to be learned elsewhere. To rise to the Mount of Beatitudes in our life, we must go to Mount Calvary for our life.—**Shall be likened.** This is the better established reading.—**A wise man,** a prudent man.—**Who,** 'such an one as.'—**Built his house upon the rock.** The Greek has the article with 'rock' and 'sand,' with a generalizing meaning, i. e., rocky foundation, sandy foundation. The English idiom usually omits the definite article in such a case. The practice was common, but the form indicates a special case, which may have been known to the hearers.

Ver. 25. A picture of the sudden violent storms so common in the East, as indeed the definite articles indicate. No distinct meaning need be assigned to **rain, floods, and winds**, except that they collectively represent trials, temptations and persecutions from without. The **rock** in the deepest sense means Christ. The definite article points to this, and the figure is thus applied so frequently in the Scriptures. Comp. 1 Cor. 3: 11. How we can build upon Christ, so that our doing of His sayings rests upon union with Him, is clearly made known elsewhere.

26 fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which
 27 built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words,
 29 the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them 'as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

Ver. 26. **Doeth them not.** Life is the test, not *knowledge*, or profession, which may be included here under the word 'heareth.'—**Foolish**, i. e., senseless, singularly imprudent.—**The sand.** The transitory teachings and works of man. For moral results, science itself is shifting sand compared to the Rock, Christ.

Ver. 27. The description of a storm is repeated, but the result is different; the winds **smote upon that house; and it fell.** Instead of adding, 'for it had been founded on the sand,' our Lord closes the illustration, and at the same time the discourse, which began with the word, 'blessed,' by saying, **and great was the fall thereof.** He emphasizes the completeness of the ruin. Admiration of the Sermon on the Mount, without obedience of its precepts, involves destruction. In order to do 'these sayings,' we must follow Christ further.

Ver. 28. **And it came to pass when,** etc. A summary of our Lord's sayings would not be thus referred to.—**The multitudes,** as in ver. 1. They must have heard him.—**Were astonished.** A strong word; 'driven from their customary state of mind by something new and strange.'—**Teaching,** rather than 'doctrine;' the former includes the manner as well as the matter of His instruction, both of which awakened astonishment.

Ver. 29. **For he taught them.** This may refer to His habitual mode of teaching.—**As having authority.** 'One' is not only unnecessary, but incorrect. Christ is not 'one' among others 'having authority,' but the only one having authority, in this highest sense, as the one coming directly from God, and Himself the personal embodiment of the Truth.—**And not as their scribes.** The scribes were expounders of the Old Testament. Their exposition, too, was in one sense authoritative; but they referred continually to the authority of Rabbi Shammai, or Rabbi Hillel, or other learned Rabbins. Our Lord introduced His expositions thus: 'Verily I say unto you.' No Old Testament prophet assumed such authority, no mere man has a right to do so. He who uttered this matchless discourse on morals, has personal authority to tell men what is true, to declare what is right,

CHAPTER 8: 1-17.

Miracles at Capernaum.

8: 1 AND when he was come down from the mountain,

to set up His judgment here and hereafter as the final appeal. None but the God-man could be the teacher on the Mount of Beatitudes. He speaks here as the King of truth, who came directly from God, and from whose authority there is no appeal.

Miracles at Capernaum, vers. 1-17.

ON OUR LORD'S MIRACLES. A miracle is a display of 'supernatural' power. The operation of the human will, which commands the members of the body, furnishes an analogy. The existence of a Personal God and Almighty Creator includes the possibility of miracles. The analogy of the human will suggests the existence of a motive for the exercise of miraculous power, and the existence of such a motive involves the necessity of miracles. This motive is to be found in God's purpose of revealing Himself as a Spirit superior to the world, so that lost men may be brought back to Him. The miracles of our Lord were wrought to confirm and seal His ministry as the Saviour of men; in each particular case, however, to teach a special lesson pertaining to our salvation. They are parables in action. The great miracle of history is the sinless Person of Christ, whom we know, in whom we trust, whom we love. All other recorded miracles are not only possible, but in a certain sense necessary, if that Divine-Human Person existed. God may exert His miraculous power according to a higher law, so that the supernatural is, in its sphere, natural; but this law and the means used are alike unknown to us. Yet the Person of Christ, the greatest of mysteries, is the key to the moral law of the exercise of supernatural power. The alternative is now more clearly than ever the living personal Redeemer sealing His mission by displays of miraculous power, or blank Naturalism, which, in denying Christ's miracles, soon denies God and what of hope is left to man. As the Sermon on the Mount is a blow at Pharisaism, these chapters oppose Sadduclism.

CONNECTION. The 'solemn procession of miracles' found in chaps. 8 and 9 confirms the 'authority' discovered in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's order is not chronological, but topical as usual. The lesson of the miracle governs its position in the narrative.

CHRONOLOGY. According to Mark (1: 29-31) and Luke (4: 38), the healing of Peter's wife's mother and of many others on the evening of the same day took place first; then after an interval the healing of the leper; while the cure of the centurion's servant, according to the more detailed account of Luke (7: 1-10), occurred much later. The difference confirms the independence of each record. The reason for the order followed in this chapter is obvious: Matthew places in prominent position and together the two miracles performed on persons deemed unclean according to the Mosaic law.

NOTE ON LEPROSY. This is a horrible disease of the skin, prevalent in the East, and especially among the ancient Hebrews. It exists in some forms still, defying cure, but must have been yet more terrific in ancient times. Near the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem I saw in 1877 these miserable creatures with withered limbs imploring aid,

2 great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came to him a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

and visited a hospital for incurable lepers, superintended by a devoted Moravian and his wife. Various forms of the disease are mentioned in early writers; but the 'white leprosy' was that peculiar to the Hebrews. (See Lev. 13.) They brought it with them from the Egyptian bondage. 'When the disease is decided in its character, it is either rapidly cured, or else spreads inward. In the former case there is a violent eruption, so that the patient is white from head to foot (Lev. 13: 12; 2 Kings 5: 27); in the latter case, the disease progresses slowly, and the symptoms are equally distressing and fatal, ending in consumption, dropsy, suffocation, and death.' By the law of Moses the leper was declared unclean and excluded from intercourse with all other persons. 'He had to wear the prescribed mourning garment (Lev. 13: 45), but was permitted to associate with other lepers. Their abodes were commonly outside the city walls (Lev. 13: 46; Num. 5: 2); but they were allowed to go about freely, provided they avoided contact with other persons; nor were they even excluded from the services of the synagogue. In this respect we note a great difference between the synagogue and the temple. On recovering from leprosy, several lustrations had to be performed (Lev. 14). The main points in the prescribed rite were, to appear before the priest, and to offer a sacrifice; the latter being preceded by religious lustrations, and introduced by a symbolical ceremony, in which the two turtles or pigeons bore a striking analogy to the scape-goat and the other goat offered in sacrifice on the day of atonement. Lev. 16.' (Lange, *Matthew*.) The disease represented most plainly to the eye, and powerfully to the mind, the fearful defilement of sin. 'The leper was the type of one dead in sin: the same emblems are used in his misery as those of mourning for the dead: the same means of cleansing as for uncleanness through connection with death, and which were never used except on these two occasions.' (Alford.) See Numb. 12: 12.

Ver. 1. **When he was come down.** Comp. Mark 1: 40-45; Luke 5: 12-15. Notwithstanding the apparently definite statement of Matthew as to time and place, the chronological order of Mark and Luke is more correct.—**Great multitudes**, literally, 'many crowds,' companies from different regions.

Ver. 2. **There came a leper.** The coming of the leper is expressly mentioned in all the accounts. Luke is indefinite as to locality ('one of the cities'), which indicates a place less prominent in the gospel history than Capernaum.—**Worshipped him.** He performed an act of homage, which was not necessarily religious worship. Even such approach was forbidden in the case of a leper.—**Lord.** This was an expression of faith in Christ as the Messiah, even though it might not then imply all we understand by it. The beautiful declaration: **If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean**, indicates strong faith in Christ's power; His *willingness* to heal leprosy had not yet been manifested. One defiled by sin can now say: 'Thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'

3 And he stretched forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way*, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

5 And when he was entered into Capernaum, there

* Here and in Matt. 27: 65; Mark 1: 44, for 'go thy [your] way' read simply 'go.'—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 3. **And he stretched forth his hand and touched him.** Such touch was forbidden. Despite the consequent healing, it may have been regarded by the Pharisees as rendering Jesus unclean. **I will; be thou made clean,** in direct correspondence with the leper's expression of faith.—**And straightway his leprosy was cleansed.** The touch of a leper defiled, carried contagion, but the touch of our Lord overcame the defilement and contagion, removing the disease. Our Lord's act in this case, as in most of His miracles, stands in a certain outward relation to the effect produced. The obvious lesson is: Go to Christ in faith for healing from spiritual leprosy.

Ver. 4. **See thou tell no man,** i. e., do not stop to blaze it abroad, but go thy way, go directly, and show thyself to the priest. The telling was forbidden until this duty was fulfilled. It is said that the first inspection was performed by the priest of the district, then a second one after seven days, then after purification a visit was made to the temple, where it was the duty of the leper to offer the gift which Moses commanded. (See Lev. 14: 10, 22, 30, 31.) Our Lord adds: **for a testimony unto them,** i. e., a testimony to the people that the cleansing had taken place.—Reasons for the command to be silent: Our Lord had in view the welfare of the person healed; He did not wish to hinder the duty Moses had commanded, nor to prejudice the priests who would inspect the man; He thus sought to prevent a concourse of the people, and the enmity of the rulers. The command also implies a caution against making too much of the external miraculous acts of our Lord; a kind of materialism, no less than the denial of the possibility of such miracles.

Vers. 5-13. **THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.** Compare the fuller account in Luke 7: 1-10. This miracle must not be confounded with the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4: 47-53) in the same city. The two cases have striking points of difference.

Ver. 5. **And when he was (had) entered into Capernaum.** This does not necessarily determine the time. Matthew places this miracle next to the healing of the leper, probably with the purpose of showing how our Lord healed those judged unclean by the Mosaic law.—**There came unto him a centurion.** A captain of one hundred soldiers (as a 'chiliarch' was a commander of one thousand men,)

6 came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my ¹servant lieth in the house sick of the
7 palsy, grievously tormented. And he saith unto him,
8 I will come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not ²worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but only say ³the
9 word, and my ¹servant shall be healed. For I also am a man ⁴under authority, having under myself

¹ Or, boy.

² Gr. *sufficient*.

³ Gr. *with a word*.

⁴ Some ancient authorities insert *et*: as in Luke 7: 8.

probably in the service of Herod Antipas, possibly in the regular Roman army. A heathen by birth, perhaps a proselyte of the gate. This class, however, is generally specified by some such word as 'devout,' or 'fearing God.' The fuller account of Luke tells us that he had built a synagogue, and that he did not himself go to Jesus, but sent first 'the elders of the Jews,' and then 'friends.' The ruins of the synagogue at Tell-Hûm (at Capernaum) are probably the remains of the very structure he erected, and in which Christ delivered his marvellous discourse on the bread of eternal life (John 6: 59).—**Beseeching him**, through the elders of the Jews (Luke 7: 4).

Ver. 6. **Lord**. This word, used by the elders, probably means more than a title of respect and less than an acknowledgment of Messiahship.—**My servant**, lit. 'boy,' as in many languages. His personal house servant ('held in honor by him,' Luke), as distinguished from the soldiers who served under him.—**Lieth**, lit. 'has been thrown down,' or 'prostrated,' in the (my) house. Exceedingly appropriate in describing the effect of the disease.—**Sick of the palsy, grievously tormented**. Luke says: 'ready to die.' Paralysis or 'palsy' was a common disease in those days (comp. 4: 24). Alford: 'The disease in the text may have been an attack of *tetanus*, which the ancient physicians included under paralysis, and which is more common in hot countries than with us. It can hardly have been apoplexy, which usually deprives of sensation.'

Ver. 7. **And he saith unto him**, to those whom he sent (Luke 7: 6): **I will come and heal him**. According to Luke, our Lord went, expressing in act the willingness here expressed in word, and on the way the occurrences mentioned in the next verses took place.

Ver. 8. **The centurion answered**, through friends (Luke 7: 6).—**Lord, I am not worthy**, etc. This humility sprang out of his consciousness that he was a heathen, as well as his esteem of our Lord.—**But only say the** (lit. 'with a') **word**. This means one word of command, as verse 9 shows.—**And my servant shall be healed**. 'Humility and faith always go hand in hand.'

Ver. 9. **For I also am a man under authority**. 'Also' as in Luke 7: 8. The meaning is: I am in service, knowing how to obey

soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my ¹servant, 10 Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, ²I have not found so great faith, no, 11 not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall ³sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom 12 of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast

¹ Gr. *bondservant*.

² Many ancient authorities read *With no man in Israel have I found so great faith*.

³ Gr. *recline*.

and also how to command: **having under myself soldiers**; hence if I who am after all a subordinate can command, much more one who is 'in authority' over disease. The last thought is required by the commendation bestowed on his faith.—**And I say**, etc. I am in the habit of commanding with a word, and am obeyed. The first two commands are represented as addressed to soldiers; the last to the household servant, who works without his personal superintendence. Explicit command, implicit obedience. 'What gives such charm to the illustration is, that the centurion ever again recurs to his poor faithful servant. Some familiar servant of the Lord Jesus, he thinks, would suffice to restore his poor slave.' (Lange.) He may have thought of spirits doing the work of healing. The servant seems to have been his only one.

Ver. 10. **He marvelled**. Not to be explained away. Our Lord could marvel; a mystery of His humanity. 'Facts came to Him, in that true humanity, as to other men, unlooked for, and as with a novelty that caused surprise.' (Plumptre.)—**To them that followed**. A multitude was probably near, all Jews.—**I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel**. In Israel greater faith might have been looked for, but a Gentile was the first to acknowledge Christ's power to heal at a distance.

Ver. 11. Luke omits the further application contained in this and the following verse, recording them, however, when repeated on a different occasion (Luke 13: 28, 29).—**Many shall come from the east and the west**. A prophecy that the Gentiles, even the most remote, shall enter the kingdom of heaven. The centurion was the first fruits of the rich harvest of the future extending to all the nations of the earth.—**And shall sit down** (i. e., 'recline at table') **with Abraham**, etc. The Jews represented the delights of the Messiah's kingdom as a feast with the patriarchs; but the reference here is rather to intimate domestic intercourse. The patriarchs are properly mentioned, since with these the separating of the people of God began.

Ver. 12. **But the sons of the kingdom**. The Jews, who, by

forth into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And the servant was healed in that hour.

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he
15 saw his wife's mother lying sick of a fever. And he touched her hand and the fever left her; and she

hereditary right and according to the ordinary law of gracious influences, might be expected to enter, **shall be cast forth** (or, out) expelled from the feast or home of their patriarchal ancestors, **into the outer darkness**. The figure is that of darkness outside the house of feasting or the king's palace, blazing with lamps and torches.—**There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth**, the intense sorrow and the rage consequent upon such expulsion. The article is emphatic. The same phrase occurs six times in Matthew and once in Luke. A hint at the wretchedness of a future state of punishment. The figures are fearful: black night, grief and rage.

Ver. 13. **As thou hast believed**, (or didst believe) etc. The faith of the master resulted in the healing of the servant.—**In that hour**, at once, at the moment. The same kind of faith was exercised by the Syro-Phœnician woman; also a heathen (Matt. 15: 21-28). The three believing centurions of the N. T.: this one, the one by the cross, and Cornelius.

Ver. 14. **And when Jesus was come into Peter's house**. At Capernaum (comp. Mark 1: 21, 29; Luke 4: 31, 38). Bethsaida, however, is called (John 1: 45) 'the city of Andrew and Peter.' When or why they removed is unknown. Perhaps in consequence of Peter's marriage. The two towns were only a few miles apart. This miracle, together with others in 'his own city' (chap. 9: 1), occurred quite early in His ministry.—**His wife's mother**. Peter was therefore married. Jerome and modern Romanist expositors infer that the wife was dead from the fact that the mother when healed 'ministered unto them;' but were that the case Peter must have married again, as he carried a 'sister' with him on his missionary journeys (comp. 1 Cor. 9: 5). 'Legend says that her name was Perpetua or Concordia.'—**Lying**, prostrate, confined to bed with fever.

Ver. 15. **And he touched her hand**. Our Lord could heal by a word at a distance, in the response to faith, but He generally made some outward sign of His willingness and will to cure; the sign corresponding to the cure and proving that His will healed.—The healing was instantaneous and perfect; **she arose, and ministered unto him** (the singular is sustained by the best authorities), thus showing her perfect restoration. The faith of her family had called for the miracle, but she shows her own faith and her gratitude by 'serving'

16 arose, and ministered unto him. And when even was come, they brought unto him many ¹possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with a word, and 17 healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ²by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

¹ Or, *demoniacs*.

² Or, *through*.

the Lord, and that too in the natural and womanly way of household duty.

Ver. 16 tells us of a general gathering of the possessed and sick in Capernaum. Mark (1 : 32) says, 'All the city was gathered together at the door.' Luke (4 : 41) tells how the demons recognized Him. For these numerous miracles of healing there was a sufficient motive.—**Even.** Either because the most convenient time, or the best time for the sick to be taken out, or it may have been the Sabbath (comp. Mark 1 : 21). Our Lord was ready to heal on the Sabbath, but the people may have waited until sundown, when the Jewish Sabbath ended. He healed them all, both those **possessed with demons** and the **sick**; two classes carefully distinguished from each other in the Gospels.

Ver. 17. Peculiar to Matthew, and in accordance with the purpose of his Gospel.—**Isaiah the prophet.** In the beautiful Messianic prediction, chap. 53. The Evangelist does not quote from the common Greek version, but makes a more exact translation, varying from the original only in the substitution of **diseases** for 'sorrows,' in the last clause. This is allowable from the parallelism of ideas common to Hebrew poetry. The prophecy refers to bearing and expiating our sins, but is here applied to the healing of bodily diseases. His healing was also a suffering with and for us. These miracles were types of His great work of bearing the sins of the world, being directed against the effects of sin; they were signs and pledges of His spiritual power. His contact with all this suffering was an important part of the work of One who for us became 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' Matthew's application of the prophecy, especially at the close of such a group of miracles, is highly suggestive in regard to the vicarious work of our Lord. The work of healing is an integral part of our Lord's redeeming work. The medical profession can find its highest incentive and truest glory in this fact.

CHAPTER 8: 18-34.

Jesus departs from Gadara; Answers to those who would follow Him; He stills the Tempest; the Demoniacs healed, and the Herd of Swine destroyed; Gadara rejects Him and he returns to Capernaum.

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 And there came ¹a scribe, and said unto him, ²Master,

¹ Gr. one scribe.

² Or, Teacher.

Jesus departs from Gadara; Answers to those who would follow Him; He stills the Tempest; the Demoniacs healed, and the Herd of Swine destroyed; Gadara rejects Him and He returns to Capernaum, vers. 18-34.

CHRONOLOGY. Matthew inserts this group of events here; Mark (4: 35 ff.) and Luke (8: 22 ff.) at a later point. We accept the chronology of Mark, who says that Jesus crossed the sea on the evening of the day the parable of the sower was delivered. The events of this day are recorded more fully than those of any other during the ministry in Galilee. The order in Matthew is probably owing to his desire to group together important miracles. The incidents mentioned in vers. 19-22, which are placed very much later by Luke (the only other Evangelist who records them), probably occurred just before our Lord crossed the lake. There is a reason why Luke should vary from the order of time, but Matthew would hardly insert them here, unless the chronological order called for it. There is, however, an appropriateness in their position so near ver. 17 (see ver. 20, and the opening section of chap. 9). These variations of order show the independence of the Evangelist.

CONTENTS. After a day of conflict and toil, our Lord seeks repose in the evening on the lake (ver. 18); He is detained by doubting disciples (vers. 19-22); sleeps calmly during the storm (vers. 23, 24), but is awakened by timid disciples (ver. 25); He calms the elements (ver. 26), and 'little faith' changes to great wonder (ver. 27). Reaching the other side, His conflict with sin and Satan is renewed; the fiercest demoniacs meet Him (vers. 28, 29); permitted to enter a herd of swine, the demons destroy these (vers. 30-32), which occasions a concourse from the city to ask Him to leave them (vers. 33, 34); He departs (chap. 9: 1), probably never to return. The whole section is a vivid sketch of the various forms of weakness and opposition our Lord always encounters. The central event (the stilling of the tempest) is the most significant one.

Ver. 18. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes. The 'multitudes' had listened to the discourse in parables (chap. 13).—He gave commandment to depart. To avoid the excited crowd, and to find repose after a day of conflict and labor; since this took place in the evening (Mark 4: 35).—Unto the other side, the Eastern shore of the lake.

Ver. 19. And there came a scribe, lit., 'one scribe.' One is emphatic; either one disciple (ver. 21) who was a scribe, or 'one scribe,' suggesting that it was rare for one of that class to be among

20 I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven *have*¹ nests; but the Son of man

¹ Gr. *lodging-places*.

His followers. It is an ingenious hypothesis of Lange, that these persons all became Apostles, being specially called at this time. But it is probable that the Twelve had been chosen before this occurrence. He thinks Judas and Thomas are the persons here spoken of, while the third (mentioned by Luke only) is Matthew.—**Master**, *i. e.*, teacher, an important confession on the part of a scribe.—**I will follow thee**, etc. Probably suggested by the fact that our Lord was about to ‘depart.’ But the proposal is to follow Jesus as a teacher and to faithfully adhere to Him.

Ver. 20. **And Jesus saith unto him.** The answer alone reveals an improper motive in the proposal.—**Foxes have holes**, etc., caves, dens.—**Birds of the heaven** (air) **have nests**, more literally, ‘lodging places.’ The two represent the lower order of animals.—**The Son of Man**. A term used in Dan. 7: 13 (*bar-enash*) of the Messiah seen in a vision, as a partaker of human nature and at the same time of divine glory: very often applied by our Lord in the days of His humiliation to Himself in the Gospels (32 times in Matt., 14 in Mark, 26 in Luke, 12 in John, in all 50 times if we deduct the parallel passages, always emphatically with the definite article, except once, John 5: 27); but not by the Apostles who preferred to dwell on the glory of the risen and exalted Saviour. The frequent occurrence of the term in the Gospels, compared with its absence in the Epistles is an incidental proof of the historic character and early composition of the former. It appears, however, again in the vision of the dying Stephen (Acts 7: 56) and in the Apocalyptic vision (Rev. 1: 13; 14: 14), with evident reference to Dan. 7: 13. Mark the *definite* article which is emphatic and not applicable to any other individual. (Ezekiel is addressed as a ‘son of man,’ *ben-adam*, 87 times by the voice of Jehovah, but nowhere as ‘the Son of man.’) The prominent idea is that of the second Adam, but also that of the Messiah. It expresses the real humanity of Christ, His condescension and humiliation, His capability of frailty, privation and suffering (in opposition to the carnal Messianic expectations of the Jews, shared no doubt by this scribe), but at the same time His ideal and perfect humanity, as the Head of the redeemed race. The divine side of Christ’s person is embodied in the corresponding term ‘*the* (not *a*) Son of God.’ (See Schaff’s *Person of Christ*). The prophecy of Isaiah (ver. 17) seems to have led Matthew to introduce this similar thought in the midst of a series of miracles.—**Hath not where to lay his head**. He did not own a dwelling, as even the foxes and birds do; but we have no reason to believe that He ever suffered from want of a lodging. Immediately after we are told how He slept in the cabinless boat on the lake. Overdrawn portrayals

- 21 hath not where to lay his head. And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead.
- 23 And when he was entered into a boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the boat was covered with

of our Lord's poverty are always out of place, yet He who as 'the Son of man' was 'the crown of creation,' did not possess what the humbler animals claim, a home. He lived of voluntary contributions of female disciples, and the treasurer was a thief!

Ver. 21. **And another of the disciples.** Certainly one who had already attended our Lord's teachings. The conversation, according to Luke 9: 59, began with the formal request of our Lord: 'Follow me.' This verse sounds like a response to such a command. Tradition (as preserved by Clement of Alexandria) says it was Philip; but our Lord had said, 'Follow me,' to him first of all Apostles (John 1: 43). As wavering is implied, it may have been Thomas (Lange).—**Suffer me first to go and bury my father.** The father was already dead, and the disciple wanted to go home and attend to all the funeral ceremonies, intending to return and follow Christ. Others understand it as a request to remain with the father until his death, hence as a plea for indefinite postponement.

Ver. 22. **Leave the dead to bury their own dead.** 'This is a hard saying, and who can bear it.' The disciple was called to a living work, and he thought of the dead. The common interpretation is: Let the (spiritually) dead attend to burying the (naturally) dead. Such a double meaning is common in brief-pointed epigrammatic remarks. 'The goal and end of those who are spiritually dead—their last and highest aim here is to bury one another.'—If 'dead' be taken literally in both cases we have the meaning: Let the dead bury themselves, i. e., better let them be unburied than that Christ's disciples be drawn away from their obedience, Chrysostom says: 'Jesus forbade him to go, in order to show that nothing, not even the most important work of natural duty and affection, is so momentous, as care for the kingdom of heaven; and that nothing, however urgent, should cause us to be guilty of a moment's delay in providing first for that.'

Ver. 23. **A boat.** The best authorities omit the definite article. It was, however, the boat from which He had been teaching (Mark 4: 36), belonging perhaps to Peter, or to James and John, and always at His service.—**His disciples,** probably the Twelve, though others followed in other boats (Mark 4: 36).

Ver. 24. **A great tempest in the sea.** The 'storm of wind' is mentioned by Mark and Luke. The word 'tempest' properly refers to the effect of the wind, being used also of an earthquake. This lake,

25 the waves: but he was asleep. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Save, Lord; we perish.
 26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds
 27 and the sea; and there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

like most inland seas, is subject to sudden and violent storms.—**Inso-much that the boat was covered**, lit., 'was becoming covered' **with the waves**. 'Shipping seas' in a boat without a deck would result, as Mark narrates, in the boat's becoming full, and of course in the 'jeopardy,' of which Luke (8: 23) speaks.—**But he was asleep**, or 'sleeping,' lying on the boat cushion in the stern (Mark). He who had not where to lay His head, could still sleep in the storm. Needing sleep, He slept: the result was a more striking exhibition of His power. (On the events of that busy day, see Mark 4: 35.)

Ver. 25. **Save, Lord; we perish**, or, 'are perishing.' Disconnected language of anxiety or terror, as in the parallels (Mark 4: 33; Luke 8: 24).

Ver. 26. **Why are ye fearful?** 'Afraid' would be too weak, and 'cowardly' too strong.—**Of little faith**. Fear while the Saviour was with them, evidence of 'little faith;' the cry to Him evidence that they were not faithless. He rewards the faith they had, but rebukes them, because of their 'little faith.'—**He rebuked the winds and the sea**, saying, 'Peace, be still' (lit., dumb, muzzled), (Mark 4: 39).—Matthew places the rebuke of the disciples first; Mark and Luke, that of the elements.—**A great calm**, a perfect stillness. No after-swell.

Ver. 27. **The men marvelled**. Probably all who were in the boat. The parallel passages oblige us to include the disciples as well as the boat's crew. The former ('of little faith') also wondered.—**What manner of man is this?** An expression of astonishment. It neither means, What country does he come from; nor, Is he more than man? The latter idea is suggested to those now reading the passage. **Even the winds and the sea**, or, 'the winds and the sea too.' The latter sense suggests that His power over other things had been witnessed; the former intimates that this was the highest display of power. Such a miracle, wrought before those to whom the terrors of the lake were the highest natural danger, was best adapted to convince them of His power to save the soul. By it He also taught a lesson of faith, and warned against unbelief, as well as attested to the mere lookers-on His Divine power. All His miracles are displays not only of power, but of love to lost men.

In the spiritual application, the storm-tossed boat is the Church, the sea the world, the tempest the persecution. Alford: "The sym-

28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two ¹possessed with devils, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man could pass by that

¹ Gr. *demoniacs*.

bolic application of this occurrence is too striking to have escaped general notice. The Saviour, with the company of His disciples in the ship tossed on the waves, seemed a typical reproduction of the Ark bearing mankind on the flood, and a foreshadowing of the Church tossed by the tempests of this world, but having Him with her always. And the personal application is one of comfort and strengthening of faith in danger and doubt.

Ver. 28. **Into the country of the Gadarenes.** The old version has: 'Gergesenes;' in Mark and Luke: 'Gadarenes.' The best established reading in Matthew: 'Gadarenes;' Mark: 'Gerasenes;' Luke: 'Gergesenes;' though there are variations in all three. We know who changed the word 'Gadarenes' into 'Gergesenes' in this Gospel (Origen), his reasons for doing it, and hence have a more correct copy of the verse than was current in the middle of the third century.

The variety in names has occasioned much discussion as to the exact locality. (1) The common view is that the city referred to in vers. 33, 34, was *Gadara* in the Decapolis, the capital of *Peræa*, situated about seven miles south-east of the southern end of the lake, and sixteen miles from *Tiberias*, on a mountain near the river *Hieromax*; it was probably inhabited by Gentiles. It is now called *Omkeis* or *Um Keis*, with many rock-tombs and ruins, which cover two miles in circumference. But this city is too far away from the lake to explain the drowning of the swine (ver. 32). (2) *Gerasa* (*Dsherash*), a city in *Gilead*, on the frontier between *Peræa* and *Arabia* (hence Origen called it a 'city of Arabia'), about twenty miles east of the *Jordan*, five miles north of the *Jabbok*. This, owing to its greater distance, is still more out of the question. (3) *Gersa* (*Khersa*, *Gergesa*), a place on the slope of a hill on the eastern shore of the lake, opposite *Magdala*. This answers all the conditions of our narrative. There are still ruins of the walls of a city there, and a large number of wild hogs in search of esculent roots. The hill comes within forty feet of the lake, and presents a steep precipice, over which the herd of swine would be swiftly carried into the water. The reading 'Gadarenes' for the more correct 'Gergesenes' may be explained from the fact that the whole region was called after the better known city of *Gadara*. (See Thomson, who first identified the place, in *The Land and the Book*, and Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 346, and *Bible Dict.*, p. 317.)

Two possessed with demons. Mark and Luke speak of but one, although the former gives the most detailed account. They probably mention the principal one, but do definitely affirm that there

29 way. And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? art thou come
 30 hither to torment us before the time? Now there was afar off from them a herd of many swine feeding.
 31 And the ¹devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us

¹ Gr. *demons*.

was but one. Matthew is always more particular as to numbers, as Mark is regarding looks and gestures. Lange: 'Two demoniacs would not have associated unless one had been dependent on the other.'—All three Evangelists agree that the meeting occurred just after landing, although the form of expressing that fact varies.—**Coming forth out of the tombs.** According to the other accounts, their abode, chosen 'from a morbid craving for the terrible.' The tombs were hewn out of the chalky rock, and afforded shelter. The whole narrative indicates a premonition of the coming of the Lord.—**Exceeding fierce** (comp. Mark 5: 3-5). Mark tells of the unsuccessful efforts made to subdue them; Matthew, that unsubdued they were the terror of the country.

Ver. 29. **And behold, they cried out.** They strangely enough ('behold') did not assail; even their hostile words confessed the superiority of Jesus.—**What have we to do with thee**, lit., 'What (is) to us and thee,' what have we in common? The language of the demons, who recognized Him as the **Son of God**.—**Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?** 'Before the time,' i. e., too soon; peculiar to this Gospel. It does not necessarily refer to some definite time of judgment or torment, when they would be forced to submit. The language is that of opposition, blended with consciousness of weakness. It is demoniacal to defy and oppose, even when conscious that it is useless. According to Luke, our Lord had already begun to exercise His power, and they knew they must obey.

Ver. 30. **Afar off.** Mark says: 'Nigh unto the mountains;' Luke: 'there—on the mountain.'—**A herd of many swine**, according to Mark, 'two thousand.'—**Feeding**, under the care of herdsmen (ver. 33). They were the property either of Gentiles or of Jews, engaged in a traffic, which was unclean, according to the Mosaic law.

Ver. 31. **And the demons besought him.** Mark and Luke insert here a question and answer respecting the name of the demons, which brings their number into view. The former speaks of their begging not to be sent 'out of the country;' the latter, 'into the deep.' The latter phrase suggests that 'before the time' (ver. 29), refers to a time of banishment from earth 'to their own place.'—**If thou cast us out.** They recognized His power, yet clung to the present habitation.—**Send us away.** This is the correct reading, agreeing with the words used by Mark. The request was malicious; that they might remain on earth, and continue their work of opposition.

32 out, send us away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And they came out, and went into the swine: and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep into the sea, and perished in the waters.
33 And they that fed them fled, and went away into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen
34 to them that were ¹possessed with devils. And behold,

¹ Or, *demoniacs*.

Ver. 32. **Go.** Their request was fulfilled, and **they went into the swine.** The fact of the possession of the swine is stated. It is not more improbable than that the human body could be under demoniacal control. The animal soul has desires and appetites which could be influenced by the demons.—**Behold.** An evidence of the reality of the possession.—**The whole herd,** etc. The simultaneous rush of the whole herd was not a natural movement, but due to the possessed, since few gregarious animals are so marked by individual stubbornness as swine. They were urged by a preternatural impulse and seized by a sudden panic. Man having a rational spirit as well as an animal soul, can be possessed by demons for a long time without physical death resulting; but the same destructive influence quickly kills a lower animal. Mere sensuous life and demoniacal influence stand in some relation; hence this is a warning against sensualism. The permission given by our Lord to enter the herd of swine can be readily justified. It suggests the above warning, it helped to rid the men of the demons; there may have been other reasons growing out of the Mosaic law, which make the loss of property a just punishment; and after all it was but a permission. Criticism of the conduct of Jesus on this occasion only proves His immaculateness.

Ver. 33. **And they that fed them** (herdsmen) **fled,** in fright and astonishment. The miracle probably took place at some distance from the city.—**And what was befallen to them that were possessed with demons.** The destruction of the swine was their personal concern; the other stands in a subordinate place.

Ver. 34. **The whole city,** the great mass of the inhabitants from city and country, as it appears from the other accounts.—**They besought him that he would depart out of their borders.** The people were heathen, and as such were more affected by the loss of property and the fear of further damage than by the blessing wrought on the possessed man. Our Lord never came back—but the healed men remained. The one spoken of by Mark and Luke wished to follow Jesus, but was bidden to publish the story of his cure among his friends. With what result we do not know, but doubtless he thus prepared the way for the gospel, which was afterwards preached everywhere. The possessed received Him more readily than the Gada-

all the city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart from their borders.

CHAPTER 9: 1-17.

Various Occurrences in Capernaum, joined together by Three Evangelists.

9 And he entered into a boat, and crossed over, and

renes. Christ healed madmen where calculating selfishness drove Him away.

This miracle alone tells of a transfer of demoniacal possession and of its effect upon other creatures than man.

Remarks. (1.) This occurrence shows that demoniacal possession was not identical with any bodily or mental disease. (2.) It also opposes the view that while the influence was indeed demoniacal, bodily possession was merely a popular notion; the persons possessed identifying themselves in their own minds with the demons. The plain language of the narrative is against such a theory, which moreover explains nothing. The main trouble is the admission, not of bodily possession, but of spiritual influence of any kind. (3.) The most natural and tenable position is: that in the time of Christ, persons were, actually and bodily, *possessed* by personal evil spirits. The New Testament accounts show, even by their grammatical peculiarities, the existence of a 'double will and double consciousness' in the demoniac. Sometimes the spirit speaks, sometimes the poor demoniac himself. That sensual sin prepared the way for possession has often been supposed, and is not improbable. Such things may occur again, but 'discerning of the spirits' was a special gift in the early church, which will doubtless return should occasion require.

Various Occurrences in Capernaum, joined together, vers. 1-17.

CHRONOLOGY AND CONNECTION. Comp. Mark 2: 3 ff.; Luke 5: 18 ff. Three Evangelists join together the events in this section. Mark and Luke, place them immediately after the healing of the leper near Capernaum. We agree with most harmonists in placing the miracle wrought on the paralytic and the calling of Matthew together at the earlier period, and inserting the feast between the return from Gadara and the healing of Jairus' daughter. Jairus came to our Lord while at the feast in the house of Matthew (ver. 18). The Evangelist must needs speak of the feast, and properly prefaces that account by telling of his call. As however the latter event was preceded by an instructive miraculous incident (the healing of the paralytic) in the same city, it too was inserted. Mark and Luke, having placed the call of Matthew (Levi) in its proper chronological position, mention the feast in the same connection.

CONTENTS. Vers. 2-8: Christ reads the secrets of the heart, to reward faith and rebuke cavilling; confirms the free forgiveness of the gospel by visible signs; the Phari-

2 came into his own city. And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy,

sees account that blasphemy (ver. 3) which redounds to the glory of God (ver. 8). The miracle on the soul and on the body joined together; Christ's greater work includes the less.—How Christ forgives, once for all, He gives joy with pardon and through pardon.—Christ's authority on earth to forgive is His, as the Son of man; God gives to men through the Son of man.—Ver 9. The modesty of the Evangelist even when he mentions himself; his implicit obedience.—The publican becomes an Apostle. Vers. 10-17. The converted publican brings together his old associates and his new ones. The Pharisees murmur. The reproof: (1) a warning; (2) an encouragement.—The Master knows of but one distinction among men; namely, whether they feel or do not feel their need of Him.—Mercy the most acceptable sacrifice.—The disciples of the preacher of repentance fall into legalism, when they do not find Christ.—The kingdom of heaven a marriage feast, even in the days of mourning.—New life, new forms; not new forms, new life. The old form useless when antiquated; the new form useless if it does not express the new life.—The incongruity of legalism and the gospel; the gospel bursts the restraints of the old Judaism.

Chap. 9: 1.—**And he entered**, etc. This verse belongs to chap. 8. It is disconnected in time with what follows.—**His own city**, i. e., Capernaum. Luke (8: 40): 'The multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him.' The feast at the house of Matthew was the next event in order of time (see the following section).

Ver. 2. **And** merely resumes the narrative, without implying connection with what precedes.—**Behold**. A remarkable miracle. Luke intimates that many other cures were performed just before, and both he and Mark mention the crowd. The account of the latter renders it probable that this took place in the house where He generally resided.—**They brought to him a man sick of the palsy** (or, 'a paralytic'). Not being able to enter the house, the four who bore him carried him to the housetop, and, actually breaking up the roof, let him down with ropes into the midst of the crowd right before Jesus (Mark).—**Lying**, or, more literally, 'laid,' **on a bed**.—**Seeing their faith**, not only of the bearers, but of the man himself, since what follows shows his strong faith.—**Son, be of good cheer**. Words of affectionate love, fully given by Matthew alone. 'Son' (lit. 'child') implies that a new relation was now to exist between them, since Christ thus addressed His chosen disciples (Mark 10: 24). The 'good cheer' came before the bodily healing, as a result of a purely spiritual blessing.—**Thy sins are forgiven**. A positive declaration, 'they have been, and are now forgiven.' An answer to the secret prayer of the sufferer. The man's conscience was aroused through his sickness; our Lord first of all gives him spiritual health; afterwards bodily health; proving His authority to pardon by His power to cure. He thus places 'forgiveness' not only before, but above miraculous healing. The general connection between sin and suffering is assumed throughout.

3 ¹ Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven. And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves,
 4 This man blasphemeth. And Jesus ² knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?
 5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven ; or
 6 to say, Arise, and walk ? But that ye may know that

¹ Gr. *Child*.² Many ancient authorities read *seeing*.

Ver. 3. **Certain of the scribes.** Many 'Pharisees and doctors of the law' were present, from all parts of the land, even from Jerusalem (Luke 5: 17).—**Said within themselves**, i. e., in their hearts, as is plain from Mark 2: 6.—**This man**, not necessarily a term of contempt.—**Blasphemeth**. The parallel passages base the charge on the correct premise, that God only can forgive sins. The language of our Lord must therefore have been authoritative.

Ver. 4. **Knowing**, by divine insight, rather than from the expression of their countenances.—**Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?** A rebuke of the substance and the secrecy of their opposition. Bold language ; it assumes, that opposition to Christ's power to forgive sins is in itself wicked. Our Lord thus claims much for His Person. According to the usual chronology, this was the first indication of hostility on the part of the Pharisees, although in John 4: 1 there is a hint that this existed. If John 5 precedes the Galilean ministry, they had already sought to kill Him (John 5: 16). The usual view, however, places that feast immediately after the call of Matthew. The Pharisees may have objected to a declaration of absolution without the sacrifice required by the law. Pharisaism has often opposed such direct absolution, calling for priestly intervention.

Ver. 5. **For**, as a proof that the thoughts were evil.—**Whether** (better, **Which**) **is easier**, etc. Archbishop Trench correctly sets forth the argument: 'In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that He does not ask, "Which is easiest, to forgive sins, or to raise a sick man?" for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving was easier than this of healing; but "Which is easiest, to claim this power or to claim that; to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?" And He then proceeds: "That is easiest, and I will now prove my right to say it, by saying with effect and with an outward consequence setting its seal to my truth, the harder word, *'Rise up and walk.'* By doing that which is submitted to the eyes of men, I will attest my right and power to do that which, in its very nature, lies out of the region of proof.''

Ver. 6. Application of the argument, stated by all three Evangelists in the same terms.—**The Son of man**, here equivalent to the Messiah.—**Hath power**. 'Authority' (the Am. rendering here and in Mark 2: 10; Luke 5: 24) would be more exact. The Father hath given to his Son authority to forgive sin, and to 'execute judgment,'

the Son of man hath ¹power * on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, which had given such ¹power * unto men.

9 And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

¹ Or, *authority*. * For "power" read "authority" (see marg. 1). So in Mark 2: 10; Luke 5: 24.—*Am. Com.*

John 5: 27, because He is the representative Son of man, identified with our lot, experimentally acquainted with our trials and temptations, yet free from sin.—**On earth.** Christ claimed and exercised this 'authority' as the *incarnate* Son of God, or as 'the Son of man on earth,' having brought it with Him from heaven, as the One who is at once like unto us, and above us all as the crown and perfection of humanity.

Ver. 7. **And he arose and departed to his house.** The test was successfully applied. The intervening moment must have been one of suspense to all, save the Healer and the healed; the one serene in the consciousness of power, the other strong in faith. His walk was truly 'by faith,' and he went 'glorifying God,' (Luke 5: 25).—

Ver. 8. **They were afraid** (according to the best authorities). Either a religious awe, awakened by the higher character in which Jesus had presented Himself, or a spiritual conflict echoing that between Christ and the scribes. The result was they **glorified God, who had given such power**, or 'authority.' Power to forgive sins as well as to heal; the two were indissolubly united in the demonstration.—**Unto men.** This probably means 'to mankind,' Jesus being regarded as the representative of mankind in this matter. The pardon of the paralytic was a foreshadowing of the rending of the veil of the temple, promising direct intercourse between God and the sinner, yet through the Son of man.

Ver. 9. **From thence.** According to all three accounts, immediately after the miracle just mentioned.—**Matthew**, the Apostle and Evangelist. 'A publican named Levi' (Luke 5: 27); 'Levi the son of Alphaeus' (Mark 2: 14). Undoubtedly the same person; the accounts agree closely. The formal call seems peculiar to the Apostles, and Mark and Luke mention Matthew, not Levi, among the Twelve. The former was probably the apostolic name, the latter the ordinary one. Matthew himself mentions the former only. Although 'the son of Alphaeus,' he was not the brother of James, the son of Alphaeus.' See

10 And it came to pass, as he ¹sat at meat in the house,
 behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down
 11 with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees
 saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your
 12 ²Master with the publicans and sinners? But when
 he heard it, he said, They that are ³whole have no

¹ Gr. *reclined*: and so always.

² Or, *Teacher*.

³ Gr. *strong*.

chap. 10: 3: 12: 46.—**Sitting at the place of toll**, or 'the toll-booth,' the custom house of the lake. Like the four fishermen, at his regular employment, and probably previously acquainted with Jesus.—**Follow me**, in the specific sense, as in chap. 4: 19. Matthew obeyed in this sense, 'he left all, rose up, and followed him' (Luke 5: 28); walked after Jesus into His place of residence. No man can leave more than his 'all,' however little that may be. To follow Christ, to imitate His example, to be conformed to His spirit and conduct, is the sum and substance of true Christianity.

Ver. 10. **And it came to pass**. The arrangement of Matthew's narrative seems to have been occasioned by the fact that Jairus came to his house, where the Pharisees were objecting to the keeping company with publicans. The mention of the feast required a notice of the call of the publican; and the call occurred during the powerful impression made by the healing of the paralytic.—**The house**, (that of Matthew himself (Luke 5: 29), who made a great feast in his house for our Lord and for his friends and former associates, although he modestly omits the mention of that fact. Some understand it to be the house of Jesus, but He had no house, and gave no dinner-parties.—**Many publicans and sinners came and sat down** (*i. e.*, reclined at table after the Oriental and Roman fashion) **with Jesus and his disciples**. Luke says they were invited, and Mark: 'they were many and they followed him.' The general character of the publicans or taxgatherers may be inferred from their associates, 'sinners,' *i. e.*, persons excommunicated and generally disreputable. Comp. 5: 46.

Ver. 11. **And when the Pharisees saw it**. They were not at the feast, but watched outside; the conversation took place after dinner.—**They said unto his disciples**, not to Him. Bold enough to act as spies, but not to censure Him to His face.—**Why eateth your Master**, etc. The strict Jews would not eat with the Gentiles—(comp. Acts 11: 3: Gal. 2: 12), and these classes were regarded as heathen.

Ver. 12. Our Lord, in figurative language, lays down a principle, applicable to the case, on their own estimate of themselves, and the 'publicans and sinners.'—**They that are whole** (*i. e.*, 'strong,' 'healthy,' in their conceit) **have no need of a physician, but they that are sick**. He is the Physician; the two classes are, the objectors and those objected to. Those thinking themselves whole (although really

13 need of a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what *this* meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

14 Then come to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast¹ oft, but thy disciples fast 15 not. And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *oft*.

they are not) need not (or do not admit their need of) a physician, but those thinking themselves sick (which is really their case). It is easier to convert open sinners than proud hypocrites.

Ver. 13. **Go ye and learn.** The citation is peculiar to Matthew. 'You are students of the Scriptures, yet do not know the meaning of the passage I quote; instead of finding fault, go and learn what you ought to know already.' The Rabbins used such a form.—**I desire mercy and not sacrifice** (Hosea 6: 6). The Greek translation is here given; the original Hebrew is: 'mercy rather than sacrifice.' The moral law is above the ceremonial law, love to sinners is more acceptable than the most pompous worship. God prefers mercy to sacrifice, and rejects the latter if it conflicts with the former. This the Pharisees had forgotten in their criticism of His conduct.—**The righteous** are those thinking themselves so, **sinners** those convinced of their sin; not those actually righteous and sinful. Sense of need is the first step toward Christ (comp. the beatitudes).

Ver. 14. **The disciples of John.** Luke puts the question in the mouth of the Pharisees, but by this time all the spiritual disciples of John must have become followers of Christ; the rest would lean toward Pharisaism.—**Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft?** Some authorities omit 'oft,' but it is better to retain it. The Pharisees, it is supposed, fasted twice in the week (Luke 18: 12); the remnant of John's disciples would be led to a similar practice by his austere life.—**But thy disciples fast not?** The complaint also implies: 'if you are a teacher from God, why does your teaching result in leading your followers away from old established forms and customs, confirmed by the example of our own teacher, John.' A demand for a compromise between the old and the new, as ver. 16 shows. External legalism here assumed to teach Christ; and John's disciples borrowed aid from the Pharisees whom John denounced.

Ver. 15. **Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn?** The companions of the bridegroom, as the bride was brought to his father's house. The festive procession was usually in the evening, with torches, music, and dancing, and the marriage feast lasted seven days. The application is of course to the disciples of Christ; He Himself being **the bridegroom**. A common Old Testament figure. There may also be an allusion to the words of the Baptist (John 3: 29)

bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast. And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made. Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

¹ That is, skins used as bottles.

in which he represents himself as the friend of the bridegroom, Christ. 'Mourn' and 'fast' are used interchangeably; genuine fasting springs from real sorrow.—**But the days will come**, etc. 'How sublime and peaceful is this early announcement by our Lord of the bitter passage before Him' (Alford).—**Then will they fast**. A simple prediction, not a command, hence 'will,' instead of 'shall.' Yet a sanction of the principle. Real fasting takes place where there is real occasion for it, Acts 13: 2; 14: 23; 2 Cor. 6: 5; 11: 27. History shows that prescribed fasts become formal; that formal fasting is closely linked with Pharisaical ritualism.

Ver. 16. Two illustrations follow, naturally associated with a wedding feast.—**No man putteth a piece of undressed, or, 'unfulled,' cloth upon an old garment**. The patch of cloth that would shrink, placed on a worn garment, would tear the weaker fibre; and a worse rent is made, since the new rent is all around the patch that covered the old one. What is *antiquated* cannot be patched up with what is *fresh*. The worn-out system of fasting for fasting's sake cannot be patched up with a piece from the new, fresh, complete gospel. It is often attempted. Many special applications may be made; but care must be taken that nothing directly appointed by God be deemed 'antiquated.'

Ver. 17. **Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins**, etc. The skin-bottles still common in the East, usually made of the hides of goats. Old ones would burst from the fermenting of the new wine, which would distend new ones without injury. This figure, representing an internal operation, is stronger than the previous one. The living principle of the new covenant, if we attempt to enclose it in the old ceremonial man, is lost, the wine is spilled, and the skins perish; even the form is destroyed.—**But they put new wine into fresh wine-skins**. The second adjective is not the same as the first. New emergencies require new means. In this case, God had appointed the new means. The former figure seems most applicable to the mistake of John's disciples; the latter to the

CHAPTER 9: 18-35.

Miracles clustering about the Healing of the Daughter of a Ruler of the Synagogue (Capernaum).

- 18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came ¹a ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy

¹ Gr. *one ruler*.

subsequent dangers besetting the Apostles. Judaistic Christianity died, form and spirit were destroyed; but the freedom of the gospel for which Paul contended remained. The new life assumes an outward form, differing from the antiquated form, and we must seek to preserve both life and form: **both are preserved.**

Miracles clustering about the Healing of Jairus' Daughter, vers. 18-35.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 5: 22-43; Luke 8: 41-56. The four miracles mentioned in this section seem to have occurred in immediate succession. On the way to the house of the ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, the woman with an issue of blood is cured; the ruler's daughter is raised; then two blind men receive their sight, and immediately after a demon is cast out of a dumb man, which occasioned the further opposition of the Pharisees (ver. 34). In ver. 35 we have either a general sketch of our Lord's ministry, as in 4: 23, or the brief record of another circuit through Galilee.—The faith of the Jewish ruler was not so strong as that of the Gentile centurion. 'Not even in Israel,' etc. (chap. 8: 10), was a later utterance.—A man of the highest rank seeks Jesus in the company of publicans, driven by paternal anxiety. The death-bed of a child often the birth-place of faith. The Lord leaves the house of feasting to go to the house of mourning.—The healing of the woman suggests: All believers do not show their faith in the same way (comp. the paralytic); retiring faith to be encouraged and brought to public confession; the timid, shrinking ones may be very near Christ; the many diseased women, whose sufferings must be kept concealed, have special need of Christ; faith is only a hand to lay hold of Christ, if it but touch the border of His garment, He will strengthen it.—The delay on the way to the ruler's house, to try and to strengthen his faith.—The ruler of the synagogue witnesses the cure of one ruled out of the synagogue.—Twelve years of sickness overcome, twelve years of health restored.—The marked contrasts of the two miracles in vers. 27-34: Two men, though blind, follow Christ, confessing Him, and are healed; a dumb man, who cannot confess, possessed of a demon (who might be encouraged by the blasphemy of the Pharisees), is brought and healed. 'The first of these miracles was, so to speak, enacted on the threshold of the kingdom of heaven; the second, at the gate of hell.'

Ver. 18. **While he spake these things.** Either in the house after the feast, or 'nigh unto the sea' (Mark 5: 21), where the conversation with John's disciples may have taken place.—**There came.** According to some authorities, 'came in.' The character of the man who came in heightens the contrast.—**A ruler** (named Jairus; Mark

19 hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose,
 20 and followed him, and *so did* his disciples. And be-
 hold, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve
 years, came behind him, and touched the border of his
 21 garment: for she said within herself, If I do but

and Luke), *i. e.*, the president of the synagogue, in virtue of his position as one of the Jewish elders. Therefore of the highest social rank in the city, as Matthew and his company were of the lowest.—**Worshipped him.** ‘Fell at His feet’ (Mark and Luke). The Greek denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to man or to God.—**My daughter is even now dead.** Concise statement. Mark and Luke give fuller details: the ruler says that she is at the point of death, and on the way news of her actual death arrives. He had some faith, but not that Jesus could heal with a word, so he asks: **Come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.**

Ver. 19. **Jesus arose and followed him.** Jairus may have hastened, yet our Lord must have proceeded leisurely if **His disciples**, as well as the great crowd, which the other Evangelists speak of, accompanied Him. Crowds usually attended Him; but the presence of the chief man of the city would excite unusual interest.

Ver. 20. Comp. throughout the notes in Mark 5: 25-34; Luke 8: 43-48.—**A woman who had an issue of blood**, etc. During twelve years of sickness she had spent all upon, as well as suffered much from many physicians, and only grew worse (Mark 5: 26). The disease involved uncleanness, according to the ceremonial law (Lev. 15: 26), and on the part of the sufferer a sense of shame as well as fear. Hence she purposely **came behind him**, or ‘came to Him from behind,’ and **touched the border**, or, ‘fringe,’ of his garment. The edge of the outer robe which He wore. This was the slightest contact possible; but it implied spiritual contact by faith, and this has a healing power, and makes the weakest means effective. We can touch the Lord by prayer. This incidental notice, together with 14: 36 and John 19: 23, gives us all we know about the Saviour’s garment: it consisted of the seamless coat or tunic nearest the body, and the cloak over it with the usual four fringes (*zizith*) in accordance with the law (Num. 15: 38). The Pharisees laid great stress on these fringes, and wore them of an ostentatious width (Matt. 23: 5). The woman touched the fringe as the most holy and most healing part of the dress.

Ver. 21. **She said within herself**, according to the Greek tense: she kept saying over and over. Intensity of feeling.—**If I do but touch**, etc. She was timid, not doubtful. It is implied that she wished only to touch some part of His clothes, no matter which. She may have looked for some magical influence; but twelve years in the hands of physicians in those days would certainly excuse such a thought in a weak woman.

22 touch his garment, I shall be ¹made whole. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath ²made thee whole. And 23 the woman was ¹made whole from that hour. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players, and the crowd making a tumult, he said, 24 Give place: for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 25 And they laughed him to scorn. But when the crowd

¹ Or, *saved*.

² Or, *saved thee*.

Ver. 22. Comp. the fuller accounts of Mark and Luke. She was healed at once; our Lord asked: 'Who touched me?' and thus constrained her to make public confession, sealed and strengthened her faith, presenting her to the world as healed and clean.—**Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole, i. e., saved thee, spiritually as well as physically.** Comp. ver. 2. Her faith is extolled, though so different from that of the paralytic. In the legend she bears the name of Veronica, and erected two statues at Cæsarea Philippi in thankful commemoration of her cure (Euseb. VII. 13 and the Gospel of Nicodemus).

Ver. 23. Matthew passes over the message, that the damsel was dead; the faith of the ruler, already strengthened by the miracle, was further encouraged by the words: 'Be not afraid, only believe' (Mark 5: 36).—Only Peter, James, and John (Mark and Luke) were allowed to follow Jesus **into the ruler's house.**—**The flute-players, who attended funerals.**—**And the crowd making a tumult.** There was always a horrible clamor at Eastern funerals (and is so to this day) by real and hired mourners and minstrels; and the preparations had begun, for early burial was usual among the Jews. The lamentation often began as the last breath left the body. The Talmud says: 'Even the poorest in Israel will not fail of two flutes and one wailing woman' (at the death of his wife). At the funeral in modern Palestine these hired wailers and chanters 'weep, howl, beat their breast, and tear the hair, according to contract.'

Ver. 24. **Give place.** A request for the crowd to retire.—**For the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.** A direct reference to the miracle, which He was about to perform. The idea of a trance is contrary to the spirit of the text. She did not die, as others die; but she is as one who sleepeth, for I am about to raise her, as one is awakened from a sleep. The same words were used of Lazarus, in whose case the raising from actual death is distinctly affirmed (John 11: 11, 14, 44). There is also a deeper and more general meaning; for Christ has, by His own resurrection and His promise to raise believers, transformed death into a sleep.—**And they laughed him to scorn.** They laughed Him down, not sharing the father's faith.

Ver. 25. **The crowd was put forth.** They were put out of the

was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the
26 hand; and the damsel arose. And ¹the fame hereof
went forth into all that land.

27 And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men
followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on
28 us, thou son of David. And when he was come into
the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith
unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?
29 They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he
their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done

¹ Gr. *this fame*.

house before the Lord went into the chamber of death. The believing ruler exercised his authority in his own house, though it may have been a work of difficulty, for people cling to a funeral custom with singular tenacity.—**He entered in and took her by the hand.** Possibly a condescension to the weakness of the father's faith, but more probably an outward sign in the presence of chosen witnesses, to mark the power as His.—**The damsel arose**, or 'was raised.' Mark and Luke tell us the words used; the former in the Aramaic language of the country: '*Talitha cumi*,' 'Damsel, arise.' She was raised and also arose from her bed. Her age was twelve years, according to Mark and Luke. A singular coincidence with the duration of the sickness of the woman, ver. 20. The three accounts supplement each other, showing the variety of independent witnesses.

Ver. 26. **And the fame hereof**, lit., 'this fame,' or 'report,' **went forth into all that land.** Many who had seen the girl dead, must afterwards have seen her alive.

Ver. 27. **And as Jesus passed by from thence.** Probably as He left the house of the ruler, certainly while on a journey.—**Two blind men followed him.** Peculiar to Matthew. Blindness was and is still common in the East, and it was natural that the sufferers consorted. To follow Him, they need only let the crowd take them along.—**Crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, thou Son of David.** Blind men naturally use their voices a great deal. The title, 'Son of David,' applied to Christ by all the blind men whose recovery is mentioned by Matthew, certainly implied His Messiahship.

Ver. 28. **Into the house.** Our Lord allowed them to cry on until He reached 'the house' (wherever it was), in order to draw out the expression of their faith. Possibly He would avoid a public response to the title 'Son of David.' The blessing is granted in such a way as to gain their faith and their confession.

Ver. 29. **Then touched he their eyes.** As an outward sign of His power.—**According to your faith, etc.** Faith is the hand

30 unto you. And their eyes were opened. And Jesus
 1 strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know
 31 it. But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame
 in all that land.

32 And as they went forth, behold, there was brought
 33 to him a dumb man possessed with a 2 devil. And
 when the 2 devil was cast out, the dumb man spake:
 and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so
 34 seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, 3 By the prince
 of the 4 devils casteth he out 4 devils.

1 Or, sternly.

2 Gr. demon.

3 Or, In.

4 Gr. demons.

which takes what God offers, the spiritual organ of appropriation, the conducting link between man's emptiness and God's fulness.

Ver. 30. **And their eyes were opened.** A figurative, but natural expression for restoration to sight.—**And Jesus strictly charged them,** almost equivalent to 'sternly threatened them.' These men had already shouted their belief in His Messiahship, in the public street, and their over-ready zeal might provoke over-ready opposition.

Ver. 31. Their disobedience was undoubtedly *wrong*. They brought Him no glory (His fame was already spread abroad, ver. 26), but tarnished their faith. Zeal which is not according to knowledge, fails to keep silent, even when authoritatively told to do so. They doubtless helped to arouse the hostility spoken of in ver. 34. Over-zealous people are slow to discriminate between notoriety and success.

Ver. 32. **As they went forth, i. e.,** the blind men. This miracle must, therefore, have immediately followed the last.—**Behold.** Another remarkable case mentioned by Matthew alone. Both he (12: 22 ff.) and Luke (6: 14 ff.) mention a similar case. Still another is mentioned by Mark (7: 32 ff.)—**There was brought to him.** Probably by the friends of the man.—**A dumb man possessed with a demon,** 'a dumb demoniac,' the dumbness being the effect of the possession.

Ver. 33. **And when the demon was cast out,** or, 'the demon having been cast out,' as a result, **the dumb man spake, and the multitudes marvelled.** The crowds collected on this eventful day had not yet dispersed.—**It was never so seen,** lit., 'Never did it thus appear,' in Israel. The double cure was remarkable. Some translate, 'did he appear,' referring it to the manifestation of Messianic power. There may be a secondary reference of this character expressed indefinitely through fear of the Pharisees.

Ver. 34. **But the Pharisees said.** Many of them were probably attracted by the fact that Jairus had called upon Jesus for help. If they had understood the saying mentioned in the last verse, as refer-

- 35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

CHAPTERS 9: 36—10: 4.

Our Lord's Compassion for the Multitude; He sends out Twelve Apostles as Laborers into the Harvest.

- 36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and

ring to the Messiah, it would provoke some such expression as is here recorded.—By, lit. 'in,' in league with, **the prince of the demons, he casteth out demons.** As no mention is made of any reply by the Lord, the Pharisees may not have uttered the sentiment in Christ's presence. On the meaning of this accusation see notes on chap. 12: 22 ff., where it is openly preferred. Their state was even worse than that of the dumb demoniac; they used their power of speaking to blaspheme one who cast out demons, as if the cause of the latter were their own.

Ver. 35. **And Jesus went about,** etc. An appropriate introduction to what follows, as well as a fitting close to this account of the leading miracles performed by our Lord; almost identical with 5: 23, which precedes the Sermon on the Mount, describing (as the tense in the original shows) a customary course of action. Luke indicates three journeys through Galilee, the second of which precedes the journey to Gadara, and is mentioned by him alone. If this verse refers to a journey distinct from that spoken of in 4: 23, it must be the third. This third circuit seems to have begun before the Apostles were sent out (chap. 10), and to have continued until their return. The verse may, however, be only a general description of Christ's ministry, closing the group of miracles.

Our Lord's Compassion for the Multitude; He sends out Twelve Apostles as Laborers into the Harvest. Chap. 9: 36—10: 4.

CONNECTION. The concluding verses of chap. 9, referring to a definite occasion, form a fit introduction to an account of the formal sending out of the Apostles. Comp. Mark 6: 7; Luke 9: 1. We have here an account not of the choice, but of the mission of the Apostles. Matthew has already mentioned the first call of some of the Twelve. Mark and Luke tell how they had been chosen as a body some time before, after a night spent in prayer (Luke 7: 12). The ministry of our Lord was now assuming a more prominent Messianic character, and having been under His instruction for some time, they were ordained as His chosen messengers. It suits the formal method of Matthew to give a list of the Twelve at this point. According to all three Evangelists, the date is near the close of the second year of our Lord's ministry.

37 scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, 38 but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his

THE TWELVE APOSTLES. In the four lists given by Matthew (10: 2-4), Mark (3: 16-19), and twice by Luke (6: 14-16; Acts 1: 13), we find the name of Peter always *first*, that of Philip *fifth*, that of James the son of Alphaeus *ninth*; while between, the same names occur in different order, Judas Iscariot being always put *last*. See the Synoptical table in Lange, *Matthew*, p. 181. The Twelve seem to be thus distinguished into *three sets of four each*. In the first the four fishermen, who were once partners in business, are placed together. Besides these two pairs of brothers, we have two brothers (perhaps three) in the third set, while Philip and Bartholomew were friends. All but Judas were Galileans, a number had been disciples of John. Our Lord therefore had regard to natural relationship and mental affinity in the construction of the Apostolate, and the same principle holds good in all His dealings with the church. Those friendships and fraternal ties are blessed which are strengthened by common attachment to our Friend and Elder Brother.

The rest of the chapter contains the discourse delivered to the Twelve, designed for their immediate mission, but also (especially the latter part) for their greater subsequent work.

Ver. 86. But when he saw the multitudes. The original indicates that this was on a particular occasion.—**He was moved with compassion.** Our Lord's sympathy, like ours, was called forth by particular, passing events. Loving sympathy is the true motive of missions.—**Because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd.** A figure, showing the spiritual condition of the people. They were suffering ('distressed') from the burdens put on them by those who pretended to be their shepherds, the scribes and Pharisees, and uncared for by these, they wandered ('scattered') as sheep left to stray from the pasture. Their physical condition as He looked upon them doubtless made the figure especially apt. All who are without the good Shepherd are thus spiritually vexed and abandoned. 'Nowhere in the whole gospel record is there a more vivid or more touching instance of the reality of our Lord's human emotions. It is not enough for Him to feel compassion in Himself. He craves the sympathy of His companions and disciples, and needs even their fellowship in prayer.' (Plumptre.)

Ver. 87. His disciples. Probably including more than the twelve.—**The harvest, etc.** A figure used also by our Lord among the Samaritans, John 4: 35, 36, and expanded in His parable of the Sower and the Tares, Matt. 13. The people were ready to hear, but could not, if more did not enter into the work. As yet, He was the only laborer. Our weak faith denies the harvest as much as it diminishes the number of laborers.

Ver. 88. The Lord of the harvest, i. e., God. The harvest in-

10 harvest. And he called unto him his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his bro-

cludes the Gentile nations, for the laborers sent forth at this time afterwards preached to them also.—**That he send forth laborers into his harvest.** Real laborers are needed, but only such as God sends forth. This prayer to the Lord of the harvest was first answered in the sending forth of laborers (the Twelve) by Christ. The mention of a 'shepherd' (ver. 36) suggest that the prayer should be for efficient laborers who are good pastors. New pastors now came to replace the old, oppressive ones who were appointed by law and not impelled by the Spirit.

Chap. 10: 1. **And he called unto him his twelve disciples.** There is here an indication that they had been previously chosen. They are now sent out as 'laborers.' Henceforward they are 'Apostles' (ver. 2), with a definite mission; first to heal, as Christ did, by the authority He gave them, so as to attest the truth of the message they bore respecting Christ and His teachings. The number *twelve* (3 x 4) has been considered a symbol of the Trinity (3) indwelling in the world (4). See Lange's Com., *Matthew*, p. 183. It had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel, which the Apostles represented as the twelve patriarchs of the new Israel. This election was the first and (besides the institution of the sacraments) the only act of Christ which looked to the organization of a visible church.

Ver. 2. **Apostles**, those sent out, ambassadors, envoys; the name was given when they were chosen (Luke 6: 13), but was strictly applicable only after the occurrence here mentioned. On its fuller meaning see Acts 1: 2 ff. Matthew mentions the Twelve in pairs, and it is probable that they were thus joined when sent out two by two (Mark 6: 7). In the Gospels they are usually called 'the Twelve' (twenty-two times), or 'disciples' of the great 'Teacher' (Rabbi).—**The first, Simon, who is called Peter.**—The Greek name in Aramaic 'Kepha' (E. V., Cephas), i. e., 'Stone,' 'Rock,' 'First' in all the lists; 'first' to confess the Messiahship of Christ, usually 'first' to speak both before and after the death of Christ. He was not the first to follow Christ; Andrew and John preceded him (John 1: 37 ff.), nor the first one called, since Philip was called long before him (John 1: 43). In all bodies of men, one must be first, although 'first among equals.' Peter was therefore *personally*, not officially, 'the first.' As regards the *primacy of Peter*, all that can be admitted as historically proven is a primacy of honor and influence, but without supremacy of jurisdic-

3 ther; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphæus, and

tion. See chap. 16: 18, and John 21: 15-18. His character constituted him a leader, but he neither claimed nor possessed this position as one of office or rank. 'Simon' means 'hearing,' 'answer;' on the name 'Peter' comp. chap. 16: 18.—**Andrew his brother.** The name is probably derived from, or related to, a Greek word, meaning 'manly.' He was the first (with John) to follow the Lord, and was called with his brother (chap. 4: 18 ff.)—**James the son of Zebedee.** The same name as 'Jacob,' and naturally common among the Jews. This one, usually called James the Elder, to distinguish him from the other James (ver. 3), was the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12: 2), as **John the brother** was their last survivor (on the name see chap. 8: 1). The two brothers were called 'Boanerges,' Sons of Thunder, according to Mark. John is generally considered the type of an affectionate character, as he was the bosom friend of the Lord, but he had a burning zeal, and knew no compromise between Christ and Antichrist. Tradition says he was the youngest of the Twelve. The name of their mother was Salome, as we learn from comparing Matt. 27: 56 with Mark 15: 40. In John 19: 25 it is probable that the sister of the mother of Jesus refers to Salome; if so, these two brothers were cousins of our Lord.

Ver. 3. **Philip**, not the Evangelist. A native of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, John 1: 44. The name is Greek.—**Bartholomew**, *i. e.*, the son of Tholmai. He is probably identical with Nathanael (John 1: 45), the friend of Philip, and is supposed to have been a resident of Cana in Galilee.—**Thomas**, *i. e.*, 'twin,' the Greek name of the same meaning being 'Didymus.' He is frequently mentioned in the Gospel according to John. He had a melancholy disposition, and was an honest doubter, who sought the truth and found it.—**Matthew the publican**, the writer of the Gospel, who inserts his previous employment as a token of the power of grace.—**James (Jacob) the son of Alphæus**, called 'James the less,' or, 'the little' (in Gr.) either from his youth or his stature (Mark 15: 40, where his mother Mary is mentioned). The name 'Alphæus' has been considered identical with 'Clopas' or 'Cleophas,' since 'the mother of James the less' (Mark 15: 40) is identical with 'Mary, the wife of Cleophas' (John 19: 25). Some regard her as the sister of the Virgin Mary, and identify this James with 'the Lord's brother' (Gal. 1: 19); the term being taken in the wide sense of cousin. Others reject the notion that the two sisters had the same name, and think that Alphæus was an older brother of Joseph, who adopted his children, and that thus they were called our Lord's 'brethren.' We hold that James the Lord's brother, who presided over the congregation of Jerusalem, was the author of the Epistle, but not one of the Twelve, nor were any of 'His brethren,' who were either the younger children of Joseph and

4 Thaddæus; Simon the ¹ Cananæan, and Judas Iscariot, who also ² betrayed him.

¹ Or, *Zealot*. See Luke 6: 15; Acts 1: 13. ² Or, *delivered him up*: and so always.

Mary, or the children of Joseph by a former wife. For the reasons, see notes on chap. 13: 55. We only remark here: In the many-varying lists of the Apostles there is no hint that these persons were the Lord's brethren; that in Matt. 12: 46-50 these brethren are distinguished pointedly from the disciples, at a time after the Twelve were chosen; the taunt at Nazareth, which names these brethren, loses much of its force, if they were among His disciples; John (7: 5) expressly states they did not believe on Him. On the whole subject see notes in Lange's Com., *Matthew*, pp. 255-260.

Thaddæus. His proper name, or other name, was *Lebbæus*, i. e., the 'courageous.' He was also called 'Judas;' was probably the brother of James, 'the son of Alphaeus,' and the author of the short Epistle of Jude. Comp. Luke 6: 16; Acts 1: 13; John 14: 22. One of the Lord's 'brethren' was called Judas (Matt. 13: 55); and has been identified with this Apostle. But Matthew was also the son of Alphaeus, and yet no one affirms that he was the brother of James. It is as likely that there were several persons about our Lord called James, Judas, and Simon, as that two of the Apostles mentioned together were not brothers, although the father of each was named Alphaeus.

Ver. 4. Simon the Cananæan, or 'Cananite.' Not 'Canaanite.' If a local term at all, it means 'an inhabitant of Cana' in Galilee (though this would rather require the Greek form '*Kanaïos*'); but it is probably derived from the Hebrew (*Kana*=to be hot, to be zealous), and is the same as 'Zelotes' (Luke 6: 15, Acts 1: 13). The *Zealots* were a sect of strict Jews, who afterwards became fierce fanatics in the fatal struggle with the Romans. They were apt to take the law into their own hands, to punish offences against the Jewish law. This Apostle has also been considered one of our Lord's 'brethren,' but 'Simon' was a very common name (eight persons, at least, of this name are mentioned in the New Testament). These three are joined together in all four lists of the Apostles, but there is no other hint of relationship.—**Judas Iscariot**, i. e., 'a man of Kerioth,' in the tribe of Judah (Josh. 15: 25). He was not, like all the rest, a Galilæan.—**Who also betrayed**, or, *delivered him up*. The latter is more correct (*παράδοσις*, not *πρόδοσις*). A tragic irrepressible reminiscence; the dark spot forever attached to this name. The choice of the traitor remains a part of the great mystery concerning God's sovereignty and man's free choice. From the fact that he was the treasurer it has been inferred that he had special administrative ability which might have been of great service to the apostolic church. Each of the Twelve had a peculiar gift. They were by no means ignorant or dull. They had fair natural abilities, a teachable disposition, and the common religious education; some had been in the preparatory school of the Baptist; Peter and

CHAPTER 10: 5-15.

First Part of the Discourse to the Apostles, containing Particular Directions for their Immediate Mission.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying,

John were men of genius, especially the latter, as his Gospel abundantly proves; John possessed a house in Jerusalem, and was connected with the family of the high-priest. All were unsophisticated, simple-hearted, open to conviction, and fit vessels to be filled with the saving knowledge of Christ.

First Part of the Discourse to the Apostles, containing Particular Directions for their Immediate Mission. Vers. 5-15.

THE FIRST PREACHING OF THE TWELVE. The locality from which the Twelve were sent out, and the length of their tour, are unknown. But Galilee, where our Lord had Himself labored so long, was doubtless the scene of this first mission, which probably covered some time. The instruction given, though directly applicable to the Twelve on that occasion, 'may be taken as the type of all the commissions given by Christ to His servants.' (Lange.) We divide the discourse into two sections. The second one is peculiar to Matthew, and more general in its character. The present one was more immediately applicable to the first preaching tour.

CONTENTS. Both Mark (6: 7-11) and Luke (9: 2-5; comp. 5: 3-16) record the substance of this section, but Matthew, himself an Apostle, gives a fuller statement, appending much that is not found in the other Evangelists. Vers. 5, 6 tell *where* they were to go; vers. 7, 8 *what* they were to do (preach and heal); vers. 9, 10 describe *their outfit or want of outfit*; vers. 11-14 their *conduct* in cases of reception and rejection, while ver. 15 adds a solemn warning.

Ver. 5. The way of the Gentiles would lead northward—they were to go toward Jerusalem, and to the country east of the Jordan.—Go (ye) not. This prohibition was confined to this mission, and was removed after the resurrection (Matt. 28: 19; Acts 1: 8). To have taken the way of the Gentiles at this time would have closed the way to the hearts of the Jews, who must form the basis of the Christian Church. The divine order is 'to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles.' Besides the Apostles themselves were not yet prepared for the Gentile mission.—**And enter not into any city of the Samaritans.** Samaria lay between Galilee, where they were, and Judæa, whither they probably went. They were not forbidden to pass through that region, but only to stay there. The Samaritans were half-heathen, the descendants of Gentiles who had been partially instructed in the Jewish religion (comp. 2 Kings 17: 27-41) when they first occupied the territory of the ten tribes, and intermarried with the remaining descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. With them the Jews had no dealings in the time of our Lord (John 4: 9), treating them as heretics.

Go not into *any* way of the Gentiles, and enter not 6 into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the 7 lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, 8 saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out ¹ devils: 9 freely ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor

¹ Gr. *demons*.

They received the law of Moses, and once had a temple on Mt. Gerizim (destroyed by John Hyrcanus, B. C. 29); they expected the Messiah, and our Lord had already avowed Himself the Christ and gained converts among them (John 4: 9-42). But the harvest He there promised to the disciples was to be reaped after His death and resurrection (Acts 8: 5). They received the gospel after the Jews and before the Gentiles. The utterance of this prohibition hints that the Apostles had some idea of the wider extension of the gospel. A small remnant of the ancient Samaritans still have a synagogue at Nablus with an ancient copy of the Pentateuch, and celebrate the annual pass-over on Mt. Gerizim, according to the Mosaic rite. (See Schaff: *Through Bible Lands*, p. 314.)

Ver.-6. **Lost sheep** (comp. 9: 36). As most needy and most ready.

Ver. 7. **And as ye go preach**, proclaim, announce. The matter of their preaching was the approach of the **kingdom of heaven** (comp. 3: 2; 4: 17). Their mission was preparatory; the gospel tells of a kingdom already come. As yet they were not instructed to proclaim the King, but were sent rather to announce the kingdom (ver. 7), 'to teach men its nature, and to prove it at hand by their miracles. If men had faith in the words of the Apostles, they would soon come to Jesus to be taught by Him.' (Andrews.)

Ver. 8. According to the best authorities, **raise the dead** should come before **cleanse the lepers**. (Many MSS. omit the words.) The Apostles did raise the dead after the resurrection of Christ (Acts 9: 40; 20: 9-12); whether they availed themselves of this power on this journey is not stated, and not probable. The power to do these things was delegated to them for the specific purpose of calling attention to and confirming their words.—**Freely ye received**. This refers both to the instruction and the power: 'Freely' means not abundantly, but gratuitously, thus they were to **give**. The grace and the instrumentality are alike *unbought*.

Ver. 9. Although their labor was to be performed gratuitously and not for gain, they were not to make preparations for the journey, but to go without first providing a store of money: **no gold, nor silver, nor brass**. This includes all the three forms of money then in circulation. 'Brass,' not even the smaller copper coins.—**In your purses, i. e., girdles**, which were used as pockets or purses. The Talmud

10 silver, nor brass in your ¹ purses; no wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the
11 labourer is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever

[†] Gr. *girdles*.

says: 'No one is to go to the temple with staff, shoes, girdle of money, or dusty feet.'

Ver. 10. **No wallet.** A small bag or basket with food carried on the back or suspended from the shoulders; an indispensable equipment for the poorest traveller. They need provide neither money nor baggage.—**Two coats**, two inner garments or tunics.—**Nor shoes.** This either means a second pair, or that they should wear their ordinary sandals, without waiting to get a pair of walking shoes, which were for more delicate use. The latter is preferable, since we should read next **nor staff** ('save a staff only'). 'Staves' was inserted to avoid a seeming conflict with Mark 6: 8. The meaning really is: they need not provide a staff especially for this journey, but take the one they had. They were to be free from care, not seeking any profit from their office; outwardly unburdened, inwardly carrying the greatest treasures. Without money or luggage they would be most free from care, **for the laborer is worthy of his food** (or 'sustenance'). Those who 'freely received' from them are expected in their turn to 'freely give.' These verses in their literal sense apply only to that particular journey, and more or less to all missionary labor; the principle, 'the labourer is worthy of his food,' remains always in force in an organized church (1 Tim. 5: 18: 1 Cor. 9: 7-14). Ver. 8, in forbidding the spirit of covetousness in the ministry, shows that the preaching of the gospel should not become a mere livelihood; this verse shows that the laborers should be without worldly care. Those among whom they labor should so provide for them as to prevent care; the extent of the provision to be regulated by the mode of living of those who provide it.

The *literal* observance of these rules by Francis Assisi and the mendicant friars may excite admiration; but the observance of the *spirit* of unselfish devotion and child-like trust in God is more important, and applies to all times and conditions.—Socrates wore one tunic only, walked without sandals, and lived in the simplest manner (Xenoph., *Mem.*, I. 6, 2).

Ver. 11. **And into whatever city or village, etc.** Left to choose their own precise route, their work involved the exercise of judgment and prudence, it was not a mere mechanical routine.—**Who in it** (in the city or village) **is worthy.** This refers either to hospitable or to pious character, probably to both, since they are often united. Those who bore such a reputation might indeed be unworthy (ver. 13); but pious people easily find each other out. The next clause assumes that they had found the right place.—**There abide till ye go forth** (or 'depart'). In this fixed abode they were not

city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is
 12 worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye
 13 enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be
 worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not
 14 worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever
 shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go
 forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust
 15 of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more

to give unnecessary trouble (Luke 10: 7). They were not social visitors, but messengers of the gospel. The time of the ministry may be wasted by social exactions. Hospitality in the East requires to invite even strangers to a meal.

Ver. 12. **The house.** 'The house' they might enter, whether it was the house of one really worthy was to be tested. But whether worthy or not, they were to **salute it**. Conformity to proper social customs, without official pride, with an immediate and friendly recognition of the expected hospitality, irrespective of the worthiness or unworthiness of the host.

Ver. 13. **And if the house be worthy, i. e., of your stay.** The worthiness of the house is dependent on the worthiness of its head. In its nature, whatever exceptions there may be, the family is to be regarded as a spiritual unit.—**Let your peace come upon it.** The usual Eastern salutation meant: 'Peace be with thee.' In the case of worthiness the Lord will ratify your salutation, which includes a wish for the highest prosperity. Salutations are not necessarily unmeaning forms; nor should Christians make them such.—**Let your peace return to you.** 'Be content with having brought a blessing on yourselves by showing such a spirit and obeying my express command' (J. A. Alexander). It is implied in ver. 14 that they should have no further fellowship with such households. The 'angels unawares' would thus be driven away.

Ver. 14. **And whosoever shall not receive you, as guests in the house.—Nor hear your words, as teachers in a town.** If refused in one house, they need not leave the town at once, although after inquiring for one 'worthy,' such a refusal would probably precede a rejection in the place itself.—**Shake off the dust of your feet.** To be done immediately after decided rejection in a house or a city. Comp. Acts 13: 51. The act was symbolical, expressing an end of all intercourse, and perhaps an end of responsibility. As His representatives, their act implied rejection and consequent judgment (comp. Mark 6: 11). The Jews thought the very dust of a heathen land conveyed pollution.

Ver. 15. The solemn formula: **Verily I say unto you,** introduces a prophetic denunciation of those who rejected them.—**The**

tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

CHAPTERS 10: 16—11: 1.

Second Part of the Discourse to the Apostles, containing Instructions suitable for their Later Ministry.

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and ¹harm-

¹ Or, *simple*.

land of Sodom, etc., the inhabitants of those guilty and doomed cities. The same comparison with the addition of Tyre and Sidon, Matt. 11: 21. Degrees of punishment corresponding to the degrees of guilt. The higher the spiritual offer rejected, the greater the sin. Applicable then only to the Jews with their light, now only to professing Christians, not to the heathen. Instructions follow which apply to the ministry of the Apostles during persecutions, introducing suitable warnings and comforts.

Second Part of the Discourse to the Apostles, containing Instructions Suitable for their Later Ministry, chaps. 10: 16—11: 1.

CONTENTS. Peculiar to Matthew, though some of the sayings occur in the other Gospels. As such trials and emergencies did not occur on this journey, some suppose this part of the discourse was uttered at a later period. But Matthew, himself an Apostle, would be most likely to give the whole discourse. The Twelve alone were prepared for so early a revelation about persecution; yet this section is more universally applicable than the vers. 5-15. No satisfactory analysis can be given; the whole is a series of alternate warnings and comforts. Trials await them in the world (vers. 16-18); no care about their defence (vers. 19, 20); the intensity of persecution, with the promise to those who endure (vers. 21, 22); then with a two-fold reference, flight in persecution, with the accompanying promise (ver. 23); the disciples will only suffer as Christ has done before them (vers. 24, 25); holy boldness and candor enjoined, since we should not be afraid of men, but fear God, who is our protecting Father (vers. 26-31); as we confess or deny, He confesses or denies us (vers. 32, 33). The opposition is further set forth by the declaration that not peace, but a sword, is the result of the gospel in the world; so that it divides even the family (ver. 34, 36); but Christ demands a love beyond that for the family (ver. 37), that for life itself (vers. 38, 39); and yet despite this opposition, His servants bring Him to those who receive them, and the reward of reception is a corresponding one (vers. 40-42).

Ver. 16. **Behold**, as usual, marking a new thought. Christ foresaw both the conflict and victory, and frankly predicted the worst.—**I send you forth**. 'I' emphatic; I who know what awaits you, send you into these trials, but as my 'Apostles,' with my authority and promise of support.—**As sheep in the midst of wolves**.

17 less as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they
 18 will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to
 19 them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak.

Contrary to the order of nature, the meek and defenceless are sent among the fierce and cruel, their natural enemies. The spiritual strength He had imparted prevented the discouragement likely to arise from this revelation of the thorough hostility of the world. Only His sheep can successfully encounter wolves.—**Be**, or ‘become,’ **ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless** (better, ‘simple,’ i. e., guileless) **as doves**. Like serpents, cautious in avoiding danger; like doves, in simplicity of motive (rather than in harmlessness). Wisdom to avoid persecution without cowardice, simplicity to encounter it without compromise. The spirit of Christ alone can combine these apparently antagonistic qualities of serpents and doves. The serpent is the symbol of wisdom among most Eastern nations; in Gen. 3 it is evil wisdom to be avoided. Next to Christ Himself, Paul was the highest model of this union of prudence and simplicity.

Ver. 17. **But beware of men**, i. e., ‘wolves.’ Men in general will be hostile. To ‘beware’ they must be ‘wise.’ Not needless suspicion, but prudent discernment.—**Councils**. The regular local courts, which tried for heresy and other offences. The sentence they pronounced was executed in the **synagogues**. Literally fulfilled in Apostolic times (Acts 22: 19; 26: 11); yet in all ages church-courts (Roman Catholic and Protestant) have been apt to persecute. Human nature is selfish and intolerant, and slow to learn the lesson of mercy and charity.

Ver. 18. **Yea and** (or, ‘and moreover’). An additional thought. Besides trials before Jewish spiritual tribunals, they should be brought before governors and kings, before the civil tribunals as common criminals. All kinds of magistrates and rulers are meant. The civil power has often aided ecclesiastical persecutors. Romanists still justify this step, while holding the theory that the Church does not shed blood.—**For a testimony to them and the Gentiles**. Probably an allusion to the ‘witness-bearing’ of martyrdom. This testimony was of the truth, and made to the Jews (‘them’) and the Gentiles; yet it was also ‘against’ both, in so far as they rejected the truth. Persecution extended the testimony; the martyrdom extended the truth.

Ver. 19. **But**. Here the simplicity of the dove is to be exercised.—**Be not anxious**, i. e. do not be unduly concerned; comp. chap. 6: 34.—**How or what**, neither about the *form* nor the *substance*.—

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your
 21 Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and ¹cause
 22 them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of

¹ Or, *put them to death.*

For it shall be given you. A promise of special inspiration for particular emergencies, **in that hour**; hence not an encouragement to laziness regarding pulpit preparation. 'How' comes first; studied eloquence checks the natural utterances of the heart, which are always the best defence: 'when the orator wholly disappears, the true orator will appear.' The promise is: **what ye shall speak** shall be given. Strikingly fulfilled in the speeches of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4: 13, etc.), and of Paul before the Sanhedrin (ch. 23), before Felix (24), and before Festus and Agrippa (26)

Ver. 20. **It is not ye**, etc. Inspiration for their oral defence is an indirect proof of the inspiration of the apostolic writings, since the purpose of both is 'testimony' (ver. 18), and writing was a permanent, and hence the most important, testimony. The inspiration affects both *what* is said, and *how* it is said. The human form is influenced by the Divine substance revealed.—**Your Father.** Never 'our Father,' except in the Lord's Prayer, which He taught others to use. God is our Father in a different sense; Christ's sonship differs from ours, and He calls God simply 'Father' or 'My Father.'

Ver. 21. **And.** The heavenly 'Father' aids; the human relatives may persecute.—**Deliver up.** Become informers. The first prophecy of actual martyrdom. The idea of persecution in general is of course included.—**Shall rise up.** A strong word, implying first, rebellion against parental authority, and then, in this connection, a parricidal course of conduct.

Ver. 22. **And ye shall be hated of (by) all men.** 'All' other than believers, referred to in 'ye.' This hatred toward Christ will spread over the world like an infectious fever or pestilence.—**For my name's sake.** Literally fulfilled in the history of early persecution. The Christianity of Christians, not their errors or personal faults, will call forth this hatred. The latter may be the pretext; yet the world has hated most those whom it was forced to respect and admire most.—**He that endureth**, or 'shall have endured,' i. e., in his confession of Christ.—**To the end.** In the case of individual believers, to the end of life, but primarily with a literal reference to great epochs; in this case, to the destruction of Jerusalem.—**Shall be saved.** Literally fulfilled in the escape of the Christians from that doomed city, but with a wider application, and higher fulfilment, in the everlasting salvation. Perseverance to the end, however bitter, is the evidence of genuine faith.

all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to
 23 the end, the same shall be saved. But when they
 persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily
 I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the
 cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

24 A disciple is not above his ¹master, nor a ²servant
 25 above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he
 be as his ¹master, and the ²servant as his lord. If
 they have called the master of the house ³Beelzebub,
 how much more *shall they call* them of his household!

¹ Or, *teacher*.² Gr. *bond-servant*.³ Gr. *Beelzebub*, and so elsewhere.

Ver. 23. **This city—the next.** General expressions, though in particular form.—**Flee ye.** Here the wisdom of the serpent was to be exercised. Flight in persecution from selfish regard to personal safety and comfort, is cowardice and sin; but flight from conscientious conviction of duty to God and to the Church, is commanded by Christ, and sanctioned by the conduct of the Apostles and martyrs (as Polycarp and Cyprian). It often transfers to a wider field of usefulness.—**Ye shall not have gone**, etc. The Son of man shall overtake you while performing this duty. Before they finished their labors in Judæa, the judgment impending over Jerusalem should come, and the old economy be entirely set aside. This prophecy has, however, a typical or symbolical reference (as chap. 24). The literal fulfilment foreshadowed what is yet to take place. In general, there will always be a new sphere of labor for Christ's people when excluded from the old one; this succession of opportunities will not cease until the end comes; the missionary work of the Church shall continue till the second coming of Christ.—**Till the Son of man be come**, refers first of all to the destruction of Jerusalem, since the last verse pointed to that event. The more remote reference, however, is not excluded.

Ver. 24. The same general statement, with a different application, is found in Luke 6: 40; John 13: 16. Here it means they cannot expect better treatment than He received, thus implying His sympathy. Notice the relation of Christ and His followers: 'teacher' and 'disciple'; 'Lord' and 'servant'; 'master of the house' and 'members of the household.'

Ver. 25. **If they have called**; as they had already done (see chap. 9: 34; comp. chap. 12: 24).—**Beelzebub** (Baal-zebub), more correctly 'Beelzebub.' The former ('lord of flies,' hence also averter of flies, one of the plagues of the East) was the name of a Philistine idol worshipped at Ekron, and consulted as an oracle in cases of disease (2 Kings 1: 2). 'Beelzebub' means either, (1) 'lord of dung,' the word being changed by the Jews from Beelzebub to Beelzebub to

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be
 27 known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim
 28 upon the house-tops. And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul

admit of this contemptuous sense (as Bethel, *i. e.*, 'House of God,' was changed into Bethaven, *i. e.*, 'House of Evil,' Hos. 4: 15, and Barcochab, *i. e.*, 'Son of a Star,' into Barcozab, 'Son of a Lie'); or (2) 'lord of the habitation' (*i. e.*, of the evil spirits). The latter corresponds better with the expression: 'master of the house.' Satan is referred to, but with a special reference to the indwelling of evil spirits in man; Satan being their lord. This view agrees with the allusions to a 'house' in connection with the casting out of demons in chap. 12: 25, 29, 44, 45.

Ver. 26. **Fear them not therefore**, because of the relation to Christ, who will certainly triumph. Another reason follows: **for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed**. A proverbial statement, occurring with a different application in Luke 12: 2; in a different connection, but with the same general application in Mark 4: 22; Luke 8: 18. This clause refers to God's dealing; the next, **and hid, that shall not be known**, to man's conduct in regard to what is revealed. The course of thought is: God designs to reveal His truth ('there is nothing covered,' etc.). You are the agents in doing so; be bold therefore, for however you or others may hide it, there is nothing 'hid that shall not be known.' The injunction: 'fear not' has then a double support; fear not, for it is your duty as my servants to proclaim the truth; fear not, for however men treat it, your Master will set things in the true light. A subordinate thought is: Beware of hypocrisy and holding back of the truth, which will be detected hereafter.

Ver. 27. **What I tell you in the darkness, etc.** A further incitement to boldness in preaching. Our Lord must first privately teach, so as to train His disciples; to them the duty of publishing the truth was committed. The verse probably alludes both to the extension of the gospel beyond the narrow limits of Palestine; and also to the future revelation by the Holy Spirit.—**House-tops**. From the flat roofs of the Eastern houses with a loud voice the greatest publicity could be obtained. The whole truth is to be publicly made known. Syria proclamations are still frequently made from the house-tops.

ⁱⁿ Ver. 28. **And be not afraid of them**. Boldness and candor in speaking God's truth awaken deadly opposition. Such opposers, though they can kill the body, are not able to kill the soul. The word translated 'soul' sometimes means 'life,' and is sometimes

29 and body in ¹hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the 30 ground without your Father: but the very hairs of

¹ Gr. *Gehenna*.

contrasted with 'spirit;' here where 'body' and 'soul' are contrasted and then joined as including the whole man, it must mean 'soul' as we ordinarily use that word, i. e., the whole immaterial and immortal part of man. Hence: the soul is not killed by the death of the body; it is the higher part of our nature; the eternal safety of the soul is infinitely more important than the present safety of the body.—**But rather fear him who is able, etc.** God, not Satan. We may 'be afraid of' the latter, but are to 'fear' the former. Satan does not destroy 'in hell,' but before, so that men are punished there with him.—**To destroy both soul and body in hell** (*Gehenna*). Comp. Jas. 4: 12: 'There is one Lawgiver who is able to save or to destroy.' God alone is the dispenser of life and death, temporal and eternal. Hence reverence and awe, not fear and terror, are required, as the change of terms implies. The change from 'kill' to 'destroy' is also significant. The latter implies, not annihilation, but continued punishment, affecting both the material and the spiritual part of man ('both soul and body'). The place of such punishment is 'hell.' There is no other probable interpretation of the passage. Such holy 'fear' is not carnal fear, but sets us free from that.

Ver. 29 introduces, immediately after the command to 'fear' God, a tender description of His care, to call forth childlike trust. The two are joined by Christ, are joined through and in Christ alone. He reveals God's power and care in harmony; He also harmonizes the corresponding fear and trust of the believer, which are therefore indissoluble.—**Two sparrows**, or 'little birds.'—**For a farthing** (or better, 'a penny,' see Am. rule 12). Not the same word as in chap. 5: 26 ('farthing'), but 'assarion' (worth about three farthings English, or a cent and a half American), the tenth part of a Roman drachm; here used to express an insignificant value, the birds being very plenty and destroyed in great numbers.—**Not one of them**. Too small to be offered for sale except in pairs, yet God marks the fall of one. His providence extends to the meanest of His creatures. A strong motive of kindness to animals. Comp. Luke 12; 6: 'Not one of them is forgotten before God.'

Ver. 30. **The very hairs of your head**. The most special providence, and the most absolute preservation. No part of our life, of what characterizes or adorns it, shall be lost. God, to be God, must know the very hairs of our head. The word 'your' is emphatic, asserting a special care for Christ's disciples: 'Of you the hairs of the head are all numbered.' This refers to all who truly confess Christ (ver. 32).

- 31 your head are numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are
 32 of more value than many sparrows. Every one there-
 fore who shall confess ¹me before men, ²him will I also
 33 confess before my Father which is in heaven. But
 whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also
 deny before my Father which is in heaven.
 34 Think not that I came to ³send peace on the earth:

¹ Gr. *in me*.² Gr. *in him*.³ Gr. *cast*.

Ver. 31. **Fear not therefore.** In ver. 25 the motive was drawn from the relation to Christ, here from the relation to God: **ye are of more value**, i. e., in the sight of God, who is 'your Father' (ver. 29). 'The humblest of God's creatures have their value in His sight; how much more human beings. Especially Christians, but above all, the witnesses of Jesus.'

The scope of vers. 25-31 is: A right sense of our immortality consists in the feeling that we are perfectly safe in the keeping of our Father: let us then not fear men, but boldly and fully proclaim the truth we have from our Master, who also suffered for men.

Ver. 32. **Every one**, without exception.—**Therefore** points to the previous argument for fearing and trusting God.—**Confess me**, lit., 'confess in me.' A peculiar mode of expression, meaning: 'shall make me the object of his acknowledgment among and before men.' The idea of being 'in Christ,' in vital union with Him, is also implied. Confession is the first act of faith; but confessing Christ as our Lord and Saviour must not be confounded with confessing a particular creed about Christ framed by men.—**Him will I also confess.** 'I' emphatic; Christ is the Supreme Judge, even in the presence of His heavenly Father, where He is the Advocate of His people (1 John 2: 1). The time is not indicated, but it will be publicly done.

Ver. 33 solemnly repeats the same thought, applying it to those who deny Him before men. Alford: 'The Lord will not confess the confessing Judas, nor deny the denying Peter: the traitor who denied Him in act is denied. The Apostle who confessed Him even to death will be confessed.' We 'confess' Christ by every genuine and earnest testimony for Him; we deny Him by every unchristian word or deed.

Ver. 34. **Think not**, as you naturally might.—**To send** (lit., 'cast') **peace on the earth.** The immediate result (and purpose, too, since with God and Christ results are all purposes) was not peace by external means.—**I came not to send peace, but a sword.** He was revealed 'that He might destroy the works of the devil' (1 John 3: 8); the inevitable result of His coming into a world lying under the wicked one, is strife. There is probably an allusion to His own sufferings and death, more fully brought out in ver. 38. He gave up His own life to the sword He sent. Yet the sword which Christ sends

35 I came not to 'send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law
36 against her mother in law: and a man's foes *shall be*
37 they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy
38 of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow

¹ Gr. *cast*.

brings true peace, while the false peace, which men expect ('think not'), brings in eternal warfare. The 'peace on earth' of which the angels sang (Luke 2: 14) is not earthly peace, but God's peace among God's chosen ones. Christ in His *ultimate* aim is the great Peacemaker between God and men, and between men and men, Eph. 2: 14. From conflict to victory, from the cross to the crown.

Ver. 35. A quotation (or reminiscence) from Micah 7: 6, which contains the same general thought of wars and sorrows ushering in the kingdom of peace. The sword shall enter into the family. The conversion of individual members to Christ will cause variance. Domestic peace, the highest earthly peace, is thus disturbed by peace with God through Christ. It is supposed that the terms: **a man** (i. e., 'a son' in this case), **a daughter** and **a daughter in law** (or 'bride'), refer to those converted, 'because the younger members and the female members of households were commonly the first to embrace the gospel,' and because Christ speaks of these as 'set' by Himself. (Goethe: '*Keimt ein Glaube neu, Wird oft Lieb und Treu, Wie ein böses Unkraut, ausgerauft.*')

Ver. 36, from the same prophecy, is a more general statement of the same thought.—**A man's foes**. The idea here expressed is the reverse of that stated in ver. 21.

Ver. 37. **He that loveth**, etc. Not to love these less, but Christ more. This explains the stronger expression in Luke 14: 26, 27. Connection: Love to Christ may divide family ties, but is superior to family affection; because it is a love and devotion due only to a Divine being. This claim to supreme love, if made by others, would be extreme madness or intolerable presumption; from the God-man it seems natural.—**Not worthy of me**. No one is worthy of Christ; but the love Christ gives creates the love Christ claims, and is the reward for all the trials and self-sacrifices here spoken of. Hence the saying is not harsh, though deemed 'hard.'

Ver. 38. **He that doth not take his cross**, etc. We may supply in thought: as I shall carry my cross. The culprit was compelled to bear his own cross to the place of crucifixion. The first allusion to the mode of the death, which must have startled the Apostles. Repeated 16: 24.

39 after me, is not worthy of me. He that ¹findeth his ²life* shall lose it; and he that ³loseth his ²life for my sake shall find it.

40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receive⁴¹th me receiveth him that sent me. He that receive⁴¹th a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a

¹ Or, *found*.

² Or, *soul*.

³ Or, *lost*.

* "Life" strike out the marg. So in 16: 25; Mark 8: 35; Luke 9: 24; 17: 33; John 12: 25.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 39. **He that findeth his life, shall lose (or 'destroy') it,** etc. 'Life' is used for every form of animated existence, from the plant to the eternal life of the soul. It is here employed in two senses, otherwise the paradoxical statement would have no meaning at all. (Comp. chap. 16: 25, 26.) In both clauses it means, in the first instance, the outward, earthly life, with all its pleasures and comforts; and in the second ('it') the inward, spiritual life, beginning here in faith, and to be perfected in heaven. This is the climax in setting forth Christ as the supreme object of our affection. It is not said that we must lose the one in life in order to gain the other; nor that each one is called to make the sacrifice. The meaning is: Christ must be loved more than life itself, or, 'he that gains or saves his earthly life, saving it by unfaithfulness, shall lose his heavenly life; but he that loses his temporal life by faithfulness, shall find eternal life.' The standard is not too high. He gave His life *for us*, and therefore asks us to give our lives *for Him*. He gives His life *to us*, so that we can give our lives both *to and for Him*.

Ver. 40. **He that receiveth you, receiveth me.** The concluding verses convey one appropriate thought, similar to that of vers. 24, 25: Christ's disciples are identified with Him. Notwithstanding all the opposition and sundering of family ties, just set forth, Christ's people carry true peace with them, bearing Him and His blessing to all who receive them. The reception is not merely a welcome of the disciples to the house, but of their message to the heart. The language is not entirely figurative. Those who welcome the men are most apt to welcome the truth they bear, and thus the Master they represent.—**He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me, i. e., God.** Receiving the servant of Christ is receiving God. Comp. John 12: 21, 23; 20: 21. Applicable to all true Christians.

Ver. 41. **In the name of a prophet, i. e., 'because he is a prophet,'** the original implying an inward impulse of love toward the object. The prophet may be unworthy, but the love and the regard arise from the relation to Christ implied in His office.—**A righteous man, i. e., a Christian, one righteous through and in Christ; the usual**

42 righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

11 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.

CHAPTER 11: 2-19.

The Message from John the Baptist; our Lord's Answer, and the Subsequent Discourse.

2 Now when John heard in the prison the works of

meaning among Christians when this Gospel was written.—**Shall receive a prophet's reward—a righteous man's reward.** The reward they receive (not the reward they can give) on the principle of identification through love.

Ver. 42. **One of these little ones.** Either the disciples, or children, who were present. The former is preferable. An allusion to their weakness in themselves as they went out on their mission.—**A cup of cold water only.** The smallest kindness.—**In the name of a disciple,** 'because he is a disciple,' out of love to Christ His Master.—**Verily I say unto you.** A solemn declaration that for such an act he shall in no wise lose his reward. Not as before, the reward a disciple receives, but a reward due to himself, measured not by our estimate of the act, but by God's. In His sight it may be more worthy than the great benefactions which the world applauds.—Thus those who went out to persecution, to cast a sword into the world, to be hated of all, bestowed blessings by their very presence, and He who numbered the hairs of their head, treasured up every act and look of kindness given them for their Master's sake. There is also an unconscious Christianity which, without knowing Christ, loves and serves Him in His disciples, and will be rewarded. See chap. 25: 40.

Chap. 11: 1. This verse probably belongs to this section, since it is entirely disconnected from ver. 2.—**He departed thence.** He continued his own labors as before, the Apostles being merely helpers. 'Thence,' i. e., from the place where the discourse was delivered, probably in the neighborhood of Capernaum.—**In their cities.** This was probably the third circuit through Galilee, although some suppose it to be that referred to in Luke 8: 1-3.

The Message from John the Baptist; our Lord's Answer, and the Subsequent Discourse. Vers. 2-19.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE. The sending out of the Twelve probably called into open manifestation the opposition of the Pharisees: hence Matthew groups the events indica-

- 3 the Christ, he sent by his disciples, and said unto him,
 Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?
 4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go your way
 and tell John the things which ye do hear and see:
 5 the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the

ting this hostility, without regard to chronological order. The account of the message from John precedes, because the course of conduct which aroused hostility in the Pharisees had awakened hesitation on the part of John (or at least of his disciples).

Ver. 2. Now when John heard in the prison. According to Josephus, in the fortress of Machærus, situated on the border of Pæraea, near the desert; next to Jerusalem the strongest fortress of the Jews. **The works of Christ.** According to Luke (7: 18), John's disciples had told him of such miracles as the raising of the widow's son in Nain. 'Christ,' or 'the Christ.' As Matthew uses this form nowhere else, it is likely that the disciples of John had thus spoken of our Lord, meaning: the one John announced as the Messiah.—**He sent by his disciples.** This is the correct reading (*διά* for *δύο*). 'Two' is borrowed from Luke 7: 19.

Ver. 3. Art thou he that cometh, i. e., the Messiah, or look we for another. Explanations: (1) John, in the weariness and misery of the prison, was temporarily in depression and doubt, respecting the slow and unostentatious mode of Christ's manifestation, and the true nature of His kingdom. His faith was not gone, but wavering. 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!' (2) John's disciples (not himself) were in doubt, and he sent them to be instructed; the opinion of some of the Fathers. This saves John's orthodoxy or consistency at the expense of his honesty. There is no more evidence of doubt in their case than in that of John. Besides the answer was addressed to John. (3) John was prompted by impatient zeal, and wished to call forth from Jesus a public declaration of His Messiahship. But this would have been even worse than doubt. (4) John wished to learn with certainty whether this worker of miracles was the one he had baptized. This is opposed by the phrase 'works of the Christ' (ver. 2). The first view is the correct one. The Bible does not represent the saints as free from imperfection and doubt. Elijah, the prototype of John, had his season of despondency: and so had Jeremiah (20: 7), and the Apostles after the crucifixion. John was at least disappointed, and may have sent this message, hoping for something to strengthen his own faith, hoping perhaps that he would be set free to see the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and that judgment would come upon the wicked ruler and court from whom he suffered; and yet doubting because these hopes had not been realized long before.

Ver. 4. Go your way and tell John. Our Lord sends a message to John, but does not instruct his disciples.

Ver. 5. The blind receive their sight, or 'see again.'

lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have ¹good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me. And as these went their way, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment?

¹ Or, *the gospel*.

The word means this when applied to the blind. In other cases, 'to look up.' The dead are raised up. The raising of the daughter of Jairus probably took place afterwards, but the miracle in Nain certainly preceded. The poor have good tidings preached to them. The 'poor' in spirit are included. This is the climax. Spiritual deliverance was the greatest miracle. The answer (comp. Isa. 35: 5; 61: 1) means: 'I do great things in physical healing, but My greatest work is the spiritual healing I bring: do not expect some wonderful temporal victory, but be content with the thought that I as Messiah am doing my appropriate and most glorious work.' The reference to the Old Testament prophecy, Isa. 35: 6; 61: 1, would give John both testimony and instruction. Even our Lord answers doubt out of the Scriptures.

And blessed is he, etc. This recalls Isa. 8: 14.—None occasion of stumbling, *i. e.*, 'made to stumble.' This does not upbraid, but cautions, implying that Christ knew best what to do in His kingdom. Result of the message: we may well believe that John was not taken away as a martyr to righteousness without having his faith restored. His disciples, after his death and burial, 'came and told Jesus' (Matt. 14: 12).

Ver. 7. And as these went their way. In Luke 7: 24-35 we find an almost exact parallel to vers. 7-19. The comment follows at once, to uphold the character of John, which might have been undervalued in consequence of his message. But he is not praised in the presence of his disciples.—The multitudes. The great influence of John appears from the fact that our Lord thus appeals to a mixed crowd.—What went ye out into the wilderness. Comp. chap. 8: 1-5.—To behold, or 'gaze at.' As if at some curious spectacle. Popularity is very often due to curiosity, even in the case of an earnest and faithful preacher. A reed shaken with the wind? Reeds are abundant on the lower banks of the Jordan. The meaning is, he whom you went to see was not a fickle, wavering character. Probably an allusion to John's doubt.

Ver. 8. But what: 'if it was not that, what was it,' etc.—A man clothed in soft raiment? An allusion to the coarseness of John's

Behold, they that wear soft *raiment* are in king's houses. ¹ But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written.

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy way before thee.
11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is ² but little in the kingdom

¹ Many ancient authorities read *But what went ye out to see? a prophet?* ² Gr. *lesser*.

clothing (chap. 4: 3).—**Behold.** This is equivalent to 'oh no, such are not found in the wilderness.'—**In kings' houses,** not in kings' prisons. An allusion to the courtiers about Herod Antipas. John was not a flatterer, nor had he drawn back from his testimony to Jesus to escape from prison, or from any selfish motive. Thus our Lord defends His forerunner from the suspicion of the multitude.

Ver. 9. **To see a prophet?** To this the crowd would answer 'yes' (comp. ch. 21: 26). But our Lord adds, **Yea, most certainly, I say unto you,** I who can speak with authority on the subject, **and much more than a prophet.** John saw and pointed out Him whom the prophets only predicted, and he was himself the subject of prophecy.

Ver. 10. **It is written.** Malachi 3: 1. The last of the prophets had foretold of John. His office as forerunner of Christ and a worker in the fulfilment of prophecy made him greater than them all.—**Behold I send my messenger before thy face,** etc. The original prophecy is: 'Behold I send my messenger before *my* face,' etc. (The latter part of the verse contains a direct reference to the Messiah.) Here, and in Mark 1: 2, Luke 7: 27, it is changed into a promise of God to Christ. Our Lord on His own authority (ver. 9: 'I say unto you'), applies the phrase, 'my messenger,' to John, and the word 'thy' to Himself, thus appropriating a pronoun referring to God. Comp. His discourse on a previous occasion (John 5: 17-47), in which He refers to His relation to the Father, to John, and to the Old Testament prophets.

Ver. 11. **Verily I say unto you.** Only *One* greater than man could thus speak concerning the greatest 'born of women.'—**Born of women.** Among mankind in general. Christ was 'born of a woman' (Gal. 4: 4), but this differs from the phrase here used as 'Son of man' does from 'men.' **There hath not risen;** been raised into prominence by God.—**A greater.** No one, patriarch or prophet, king or priest, was greater; for John was the forerunner of Christ. Relation to Christ is the true measure of greatness.—**But he that is but little,** lit., 'less,' either less than John or less than others. The latter seems preferable, and is really equivalent to 'least.' Christ speaks of

12 of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.
 13 For all the prophets, and the law prophesied until John.

his disciples as 'the little ones who believe on Him,' Matt. 10: 42.—In the kingdom of heaven, *i. e.*, the new dispensation of grace which Christ introduces. Not 'in the preaching of the kingdom of heaven.' John, on the threshold of the kingdom, was in position the greatest of all Old Testament prophets and saints, but the least Christian, being in the kingdom, is as to position (not personal merit) greater than he. Those *born* of the Spirit are greater than the greatest born of women. The relation to Christ is still more intimate, and that determines the relative greatness. John is regarded as still outside the kingdom into which he may have afterwards entered. If 'less' be understood as meaning 'less than John,' then the reference is to relative position, *i. e.*, one lower in position or dignity in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John, who occupied the highest place in the old dispensation. But this is indefinite. The Fathers referred 'He that is less' to Christ, but Christ is not in the kingdom (the kingdom is in Him), and such a comparison is scarcely admissible after the application of prophecy made in ver. 10. It would be a poor truism to say that the king is greater than the herald who announces his coming.

Ver. 12. **And from the days of John the Baptist until now.** A period of not much more than a year, it is supposed.—**The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence**, or 'is assaulted by storm' (in a good sense, referring to the excitement and earnest endeavor awakened in the brief period since John appeared), **and men of violence** (men of eager, impetuous zeal, making the effort) **take it by force**, actually succeed in entering in. Although John belonged to the old economy, the new ('the kingdom of heaven') was already on earth, and the first evidence of its coming was the preaching of John and the excited interest it had aroused, in the crowds of Galilee and Judæa that eagerly rushed to his preaching. This is in praise of John, but designed especially to convey the idea that a new era had already dawned, which deserved the endeavor that had been aroused. Some, with less ground, suppose John and Christ to be referred to by 'the violent.' The verse states a historical fact, suggesting that earnest endeavor is necessary in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 13. **For.** A proof of the coming in of the new era.—**All the prophets and the law, *i. e.*, the whole Old Testament.—Prophe- sied.** Only 'prophesied.' 'The law' is also a prophecy, even its ceremonies point to Christ.—**Until John.** Including him as the last of the series, still belonging to the old dispensation, but closing its prophecy, when he ushered in the Messiah. The joining of John with the prophets is a further support of his high position.

14 And if ye are willing to receive ¹*it*, this is Elijah,
15 which is to come. He that hath ears ²*to hear*, let him
16 hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation?

It is like unto children sitting in the market-places,
17 which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto
you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not

¹ Or, *him*.

² Some ancient authorities omit *to hear*.

Ver. 14. **And if ye are willing to receive it.** The Jews expected that Elijah would rise from the dead, hence many would not receive it. The popular notions on the whole subject of prophecy were incorrect; for in the day of fulfilment our Lord thus prefaces an explanation.—**This is Elijah**, etc. Mal. 4: 5, applied to John before his birth by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1: 17, 'in the spirit and power of Elijah'). Not the entire fulfilment of the prophecy, for John himself (John 1: 21) said he was not Elijah, and our Lord afterwards intimated that another coming of Elijah is to be expected (Matt. 17: 11).

Ver. 15. **He that hath ears to hear**, etc. This usually follows an important statement, intimating that he who has the discernment to understand will find the deeper meaning. Here it suggests: Christ meant more than that John was Elijah, that He Himself was the Messiah. Then, as now, properly to understand the Scriptures, was to know Christ. The comparison which follows intimates that few would 'receive' the truth respecting John, or have 'ears to hear' the glad news of the Messiah's presence.—If John wished our Lord to declare Himself, his wish was granted; but the revelation was, as always, only to those who really sought to know Christ.

Vers. 16-19 contain parallels and contrasts as in Hebrew poetry. In Luke the poetic form is even more marked.

Ver. 16. **This generation**, *i. e.*, the people then living in Judæa.—**Children**, etc. These children are represented as idling in public places, **sitting in the market-places**. A common amusement of children in the East.

Ver. 17. One set of children is represented as having invited another set to play, first in a mock wedding, and then in a mock funeral; but the latter would not join them. Explanations: (1) The children calling, represent John and Jesus; but these two earnest preachers would not be likened to idling, petulant children, and in that case the 'mourning' ought to precede the 'piping'.—(2) Those who will not play represent the two preachers; but this is opposed to the word 'fellows' or 'companions' in ver. 16, as well as to the parallel passage in Luke (7: 32), where the children are spoken of as 'calling to one another.' All the children were petulant.—(3) The simplest view: The whole company of children represent the Jews, engaged in the childish pursuits of amusement, and showing disagreement, discontent,

18 ¹mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, 19 and they say, He hath a ²devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! And wisdom ³is justified by her ⁴works.

¹ Gr. *beat the breast*.² Gr. *demon*.³ Or, *was*.⁴ Many ancient authorities read *children*; as in Luke 7: 35.

and petulance. With these 'children' the children of wisdom are contrasted (Luke).

Ver. 18. **For.** An evidence of the petulant spirit (so ver. 19).—**John came neither eating nor drinking.** He came as a prophet, and living in a peculiar manner, 'neither eating bread nor drinking wine' (Luke 7: 33); 'his meat was locusts and wild honey' (chap. 3: 4).—**And they say, He hath a demon.** A demon of melancholy; he is a fanatic, he is crazy. Insanity was popularly traced to demoniacal possession.

Ver. 19. **The Son of man.** Peculiarly appropriate here, where our Lord speaks of Himself as appearing in His exalted mission, **eating and drinking**, like all other men; going to places of festivity, such as the wedding at Cana, the feast at the house of Levi, identifying Himself with men in their ordinary life.—**Behold.** Those who cried out against austerity objected also to a teacher of righteousness, who showed himself thoroughly human in social life.—**A wine-bibber.** Our Lord used wine, as those about Him did. There was nothing singular in His social habits as the Son of man. But the generation which had denounced asceticism in John, at once magnified this into a crime.—**A friend of publicans and sinners.** Thoroughly worldly people seek to parry the claims of spiritual truth by assailing its teachers, in childish petulance, with such contradictory accusations, extending their criticisms to dress, food, expression of countenance, cut of the beard and parting of the hair. Much time has been wasted in trying to satisfy those 'sitting in the markets' and playing there. Those who hate the truth will hate its representatives, and will never understand their principles, or be satisfied with their practice. To our own Master we stand or fall.—**And**, or, 'and yet,' in opposition to this childish conduct, **Wisdom**, the wisdom of God, personified here, as in the Book of Proverbs, **was justified**; not 'is,' nor 'will be.'—**By**, or 'from,' **her works.** The common reading here is borrowed from Luke 7: 35: 'by all her children.' The general sense is the same; here the reference is to the *actions* of these children of wisdom. The judgments of the world are childish, those of the children of wisdom are childlike, in humility and faith, and their 'works' correspond. The result in their case has justified the wisdom of God's method. Some, however, refer the clause to the

CHAPTER 11: 20-30.

Denunciation of Judgment on the Cities of Galilee, followed by a Striking Ascription of Praise and a Tender Invitation.

20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his ¹mighty works were done, because they repented

¹ Gr. *powers*.

Jews, either in solemn irony (claiming to have wisdom, their works should justify it), or implying that their contradictory judgments confuted each other, and thus confirmed 'wisdom.'

Denunciation of Judgment on the Cities of Galilee, followed by a Striking Ascription of Praise and a Tender Invitation, vers. 20-30.

CONTENTS. This section is a continuation of the preceding discourse. The comparison between the children of 'this generation' and 'wisdom,' which is justified by her works, is, on the one hand, sharpened into a declaration of judgment against the unrepentant cities He had visited, and, on the other, expanded into a thanksgiving, a declaration of His own exalted position, and a tender invitation. The connection with what precedes is obvious, and also the relation of the two parts. The thoughts of vers. 21-24 were uttered again at the sending out of the Seventy (Luke 10: 12-15). The woe has been fearfully fulfilled. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum have utterly disappeared, and their very sites are disputed. The shores of the Lake of Gennesareth, once flourishing as a garden, are a wilderness with only two miserable places (Tiberias and Mejdel, the ancient Magdala) remaining. On the lake once white with sails, there are but a few rough fishing boats. (See Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 343 sqq.)—The authoritative tone of vers. 21-24, the declaration of what would have taken place, the positive statement of what will occur at the judgment, form a contrast to the tendernees of vers. 25-30. But both parts coincide with our Lord's character of holy love. The authority to invite involves the authority to denounce; the willingness to bless implies the curse of those who would not be blessed; the praise of the Father's good pleasure befits the Son who reveals Him.

LESSONS: In the sight of Christ, one rejecting Him in the midst of light is worse than a heathen. Offers of grace and threats of judgment are proportionate. Faithful preaching makes the faithless hearer more guilty. Pride hardens even more than impurity. The woe of judgment; the echo of a woe of pity from Christ's heart. 'So it was well-pleasing,' the comfort of God's adopted children, taught them by the only Begotten. The authority of the Son the security for our rest in Him. The declaration of His ability to bless followed by a declaration of His willingness (see further on the verses). Christ the rest of the soul. Man is made for Christ, and his heart is without rest till it rests in Him. (Compare Augustin's famous sentence: '*Tu nos fecisti ad Te, et cor nostrum inquietum est donec requiescat in Te.*')

Ver. 20. Then began he. Probably 'pointing to a pause or change of manner of our Lord.'—To upbraid. Often used of men

- 21 not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the ¹mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
- 22 Howbeit I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for

¹ Gr. *powers*.

in a bad sense, here, implying moral disapproval and righteous indignation.—**Wherein most of his mighty works were done.** Only a small part of our Lord's miracles are detailed by the Evangelists (comp. John 21: 25). We have no account of any miracles in 'Chorazin' and 'Bethsaida' (ver. 21).—**Because they repented not.** The object of the miracles was to lead to repentance and faith in Christ.

Ver. 21. The more remote and less important places come first. There is a rising climax.—**Chorazin.** Mentioned only here and Luke 10: 13. Situated two Roman miles north-west of Tell-Hum (Caper-naum), now called Kerazeh, where there are still extensive ruins, including a synagogue, columns and walls of dwellings. Others place it at Tell-Hum.—**Bethsaida.** House of Fish. A city of Galilee (John 12: 21); the home of Peter, of Andrew, and of Philip (John 1: 44; 12: 21). Mark mentions the name twice (6: 45; 8: 22). In one instance the reference to a place on the eastern shore is obvious. Views: (1) The ancient view: but one place, namely, on the western shore. This involves difficulty in explaining Mark 6: 45. (2) The usual modern view: two places, namely, 'Bethsaida of Galilee' (John 12: 21), on the western shore; 'Bethsaida Julias' on the eastern shore. (3) The latest and best view: One place situated at the northern end of the lake on both sides of the inlet of the Jordan, hence partly in Galilee, and partly in Gaulonitis, on the east bank of the Jordan. The latter had been beautified by Herod Philip, and named by him after Julia, the beautiful, but profligate daughter of the Emperor Augustus. So Dr. Thomson.—**Tyre and Sidon.** Ancient Gentile cities in existence at that time. The corruption of these places had been spoken of ages before by the prophets.—**They would have repented.** Our Lord claims knowledge of contingent spiritual events. Tyre became a Christian city, while Tiberias on the Lake of Galilee became the seat of Jewish Talmudism.—**Long ago.** Either, the cities would have changed their character in ages past, or the present inhabitants would have repented speedily.—**In sackcloth and ashes.** The symbol of mourning and repentance (comp. Jonah 3: 5-9, on the repentance of Nineveh). The costume of mourners resembled a sack with holes for the arms, and it was usual to strew ashes upon the head.

Ver. 22. **Howbeit I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable.** An authoritative judgment as to the measure of human respon-

- Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.
 23 And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt ¹go down unto Hades: for if the ²mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.
 24 Howbeit I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.
 25 At that season Jesus answered and said, I ³thank

¹ Many ancient authorities read *be brought down*. ² Gr. *powers*. ³ Or, *praise*.

sibility. There are different degrees of future punishment corresponding to the degrees of guilt in the neglect of opportunities; comp. 5: 21, 22; 10: 15; Luke 12: 47, 48; John 9: 41; 15: 22, 24; Rom. 2: 12. This distinction weakens the force of objections to future punishment.—**At the day of judgment.** This implies an intermediate state between death and resurrection.

Ver. 23. **Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven?** The correct reading ($\mu\eta$ for η) is a question anticipating a negative answer: Nay, thou shalt go down, etc. Capernaum (Capharnahum, i. e., the village of Nahum), as the centre of our Lord's activity, enjoyed special privileges. Its site is disputed: some locate it at *Khan Minyeh* near the lake shore; others more probably about three miles further north at *Tell-Hum* (i. e., the ruins of Hum, or Nahum). The identity of name and the ruins of a synagogue and ancient town buried beneath the soil are in favor of Tell-Hum. (See Schaff's *Bible Dict.*) The country around is one of entire desolation and overgrown with thistles and thorns.—**Shalt go down unto Hades**, the 'abode of the dead,' not the place of future punishment (Gehenna). A figure of spiritual destitution and desolation, as 'heaven' represents privilege. Nothing positive about 'Hades' can be inferred from this verse, though it certainly hints at a disembodied state between death and the resurrection, which differs from 'hell,' where both 'soul and body' are punished (10: 28). Temporal judgments have been linked with the spiritual degradation here predicted.—**Sodom** (compare its history in Genesis, chaps. 13-19) was the synonym for wickedness.—**Remained until this day.** As it was the oldest city of importance in Palestine, the language is the more striking.

Ver. 24. A future judgment is referred to, since our Lord speaks of what *shall take place* with regard to Sodom, which had been so long destroyed. The inhabitants had not been annihilated.

Ver. 25. **At that season.** Probably immediately after the denunciation just recorded.—**Answered.** Not necessarily to an oral question, nor even to the thoughts of the listeners. The ascription of praise seems rather an answer to His Heavenly Father.—**I thank**

thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, ²⁷ for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whom-

¹ Or, *that*.

thee. 'I fully confess, thankfully acknowledge the justice of Thy doings.'—O, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Christ addresses God as His 'Father,' not as His 'Lord.' There are four instances of such public address of our Saviour to His Father; in each case resulting from deep emotion (John 11: 41; 12: 28; 17: 1; Luke 23: 34). Here the cause was the impenitence of 'His own' people. The term, 'Lord of heaven and earth,' is peculiarly appropriate, since He was about to mention another evidence of God's sovereignty.—**That thou didst hide these things,** i. e., the character and saving work of Christ, but including the condemnation of the proud, the saving of the humble, and the righteousness and mercy of God, as thereby displayed; for the revelation of all these things centres in the revelation of Christ to the believing heart. God hides such things only in just judgment, and the exercise of His justice is rather a leaving of the sinner to the natural result of his sin.—**The wise and understanding,** according to a worldly estimate; in this case, Pharisees and proud Jews. Those most learned and sagacious in all earthly things often cannot understand the simplest truths of Christianity. They are hid from them, by God indeed, but through their own pride. Merely intellectual culture usually leads to pride, which is the greatest hindrance in learning moral and religious truth.—**Reveal them.** These things are revealed in general to men in the Gospel.—**Unto babes.** His disciples, who believe like little children what their Heavenly Father reveals to them. (Schiller: '*Was kein Verstand der Verständigen sieht, Das übet in Einfalt ein kindlich Gemüth.*')

Ver. 26. Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. Praise for His 'good pleasure,' which involves His wisdom and goodness. When men deny these qualities or we cannot fully perceive them, we may still praise His 'good-pleasure,' as our Master did. The prayer, vers. 25, 26, resembles in spirit the sacerdotal prayer, John 17. The prayers of our Lord were probably offered when he was apart, or the disciples shrank from attempting to record these most sacred utterances. Matthew rises here to the spiritual height of John, and gives us a fragment of that higher teaching which the beloved disciple was especially qualified to keep and to record.

Ver. 27. All things, whether of judgment or salvation, of hiding or revealing.—Have been delivered unto me by my Father.

28 soever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. Come unto me,
 all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give
 29 you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me:
 for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find

'All things were by the Father brought into connection with, and subordination to, the economy instituted by Christ.' (Lange.) His power as King extends over both the lost and saved. Comp. 28: 19. —**And no one knoweth the Son save the Father**, etc. This great mystery of Christ's power over all things rests upon the greatest of mysteries, the person of Christ, the Son, as related to the Father, a mystery *thoroughly* known (as the Greek word means) only to the two parties, the Father and the Son.—**And he to whomsoever the Son willeth** (is willing) **to reveal him**. The Son is the Revealer of this mystery, and about it all revelation centres, not only written revelation, but the revelation made to our hearts. This verse, the genuineness of which is not disputed, is again truly Johannean, and contradicts the notion that the view of the Person of Christ presented in the fourth Gospel is different from that of the three others. To know God men need a revelation from this lowly Saviour. The same pride still refuses it. John the Baptist had said this of Christ (John 8: 35), and now Christ says it Himself in a discourse which began in a defence of the Baptist.

Ver. 28. **Come unto me**. Christ now shows first of all His *willingness* (comp. ver. 27) in this invitation. One of the most precious and comforting passages in the Gospels. Nothing finer in the Gospel of John. No mere man could speak thus without intolerable presumption. From the lips of the Saviour the invitation sounds most natural. —**All ye that labor**, etc., 'all the laboring and the burdened.' A figurative description of men seeking to become holy by external acts of righteousness. The immediate reference is to the Jews struggling to obtain deliverance through the law, and oppressed by the yoke placed upon them by the Pharisaical interpretation of it. It is applicable to all men as subject to misery, actively and passively; but most directly to those conscious of sin, striving to make themselves better, or sinking under a sense of their guilt. No burden so heavy as the burden of sin on the conscience.—**And I will give you rest**. 'I' is emphatic in the Greek, I alone, no one else; other teachers lay burdens on you, I am able, as well as willing, to end your useless labor and remove the crushing burden.

Ver. 29. **Take my yoke upon you**. The Jews called the law a '*yoke*.' Our Lord here refers to His rule, doctrine, and leadership.—**And learn of me**. Either, take pattern from me, or as the context suggests, become my disciples. Comp. Ecclesiasticus 51: 26: 'Put your neck under the yoke, and let your soul receive instruction.' The Talmud speaks of 'the yoke of the law,' 'the yoke of repentance,' 'the yoke of faith,' 'the yoke of God,' etc.—**For I am meek and**

30 rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

CHAPTER 12: 1–21.

Two Sabbath-day Discussions; our Lord retires in Consequence of the Hostility of the Pharisees.

12 AT that season Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the cornfields; and his disciples were an hungred, and

lowly in heart, not in appearance merely, as the scribes. Humility is the first requisite in learning of God. The 'meek and lowly' One can teach us this first lesson. The lowliness seems the greater from the language of ver. 27.—**And ye shall find rest unto your souls.** Rest of soul is the true aim; we must seek it, and seek it from Christ. A quotation from Jeremiah 6: 16.

Ver. 30. **For my yoke is easy** (wholesome), **and my burden is light.** The 'yoke' answers to those 'laboring'; the 'burden' to those 'heavy-laden.' Christ does not promise freedom from labor and burdens, but promises that we shall be so changed as to find them wholesome and light. Christ indeed demands a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and teaches us that there is a depth of meaning in the law, which our consciences did not perceive; yet He says that His yoke, His requirements, are wholesome, and His burden, oftentimes a cross, is light! One who goes to Christ to find rest for his soul, obtains from Him peace of conscience and power to obey. We go to Him as a teacher meek and lowly in heart; the first lesson learned is, to humbly and penitently take from Him what we need. What He has done *for us* secures pardon, what he does *in us* gives power. The Teacher of the highest morality could only fulfil these promises by becoming an actual Saviour from sin; that He can and will save is the ground tone of the whole passage. Saved by Him, indeed, as Augustine says, the yoke is like the plumage of the bird—an easy weight enabling it to soar heavenward. Christ's commandment is love, and love believes, hopes, and endures all things.

Two Sabbath-day Discussions; our Lord retires in Consequence of the Hostility of the Pharisees. Vers. 1–21.

THE SABBATH CONTROVERSY. Comp. Mark 2: 23–28; 3: 1–5; Luke 6: 1–11. The controversy is connected by Matthew with the easy yoke of Christ (ch. 11), but took place before the Sermon on the Mount, according to Luke. Hence there is no allusion to it in the sermon. To understand our Lord's teachings in regard to Sabbath observance we should remember the circumstances in which he spoke. (1) The strict observance of the Sabbath was the great outward mark of distinction of the Jews in and after the exile. As spirituality decreased, formality increased. The Fourth Commandment was made the basis of over refined distinctions and petty minutiae. Here then was

2 began to pluck ears of corn, and to eat. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the 3 sabbath. But he said unto them, Have ye not read

the stronghold both of Jewish exclusiveness and Pharisaical formalism. To this our Lord must be antagonistic. (2) There is no evidence that the Fourth Commandment was abrogated any more than the rest of the Ten, or that its requirements were curtailed. Our Lord's arguments are drawn either from Old Testament facts and principles, or from Jewish practice. He gave a spiritual character to the whole Decalogue, and His opposition was to the unspiritual observance of the Sabbath. To keep the Christian Sabbath as Christ would have us do it, also 'exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.' (3) The two discussions, recorded by three Evangelists, point to the lawfulness and even duty of performing on the Sabbath works of *necessity* (first Sabbath) and of *mercy* (second Sabbath). The accounts differ in a number of points: one Evangelist omitting an argument rendered prominent by another; but the principles laid down are essentially the same. (4) 'The Sabbath is made for man' (even in Paradise before the fall, (Mark 2: 27), as a means to an end, as marriage and government are made for man, *i. e.*, for his benefit and happiness; it is therefore a most benevolent institution, a gracious gift of God.

Ver. 1. **At that time**, or 'season.' Here used indefinitely. It was between the Passover and the Feast of Pentecost, between the wheat and the barley harvest. See Luke 6: 1, as to the date.—**Through the corn fields** (or grain fields).¹ The grain was probably barley, which ripens in April in that region, and is usually harvested in May.—**His disciples**. Not the 'Twelve' exclusively, probably including most of them.—**And began to pluck ears of corn** ('grain'). Permitted by the Mosaic law (Deut. 23: 25). The word 'began' hints that they were interrupted by the objection of the Pharisees.

Ver. 2. **But the Pharisees, when they saw it**. They were lying in wait for something as a ground of opposition.—**They said unto him**. Luke represents the objection as made to the disciples, both were probably addressed.—**That which it is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath**. It was lawful on other days, all admitted; but the Pharisees claimed it was not lawful on the Sabbath. Plucking grain on the Sabbath was construed by the Rabbins into a kind of harvesting, and rubbing the grain in the hands (mentioned by Luke) as a kind of threshing. This departure from their formal legalism was magnified by the Pharisees into a breaking of God's law.

Ver. 3. **Have ye not read what David did**. All three Evangelists record this main argument against the Pharisees. The case of

¹ The American Committee would have preferred throughout 'grain' for 'corn' when used generically, to prevent the mistake of thinking of maize or Indian corn, which was unknown at that time. The English Bible uses 'corn' for all sorts of cereals, such as wheat, barley, millet, and fitches.

what David did when he was an hungry, and they
 4 that were with him; how he entered into the house of
 God, and ¹did eat the shew-bread, which it was not
 lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with
 5 him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read
 in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in
 the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless?
 6 But I say unto you, that ²one greater than the temple
 7 is here. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I

¹ Some ancient authorities read *they did eat*.

² Gr. a *greater thing*.

David (1 Sam. 21: 1-6) was peculiarly in point. The Pharisees insisted that their mode of observing the Sabbath was needful, if a man would be a patriotic Jew and acceptable to God, but a model of Jewish piety had, according to the Scriptures, violated the law as they construed it.—**Hungry**, as His disciples had been.

Ver. 4. The house of God. The tabernacle at Nob.—**The shew-bread.** Twelve loaves were placed in rows upon a table in the holy place, as a symbol of the communion of God with men. They were renewed every seven days, on the Sabbath, the old loaves being eaten by the priests. David probably came on the day the old loaves were taken away, *i. e.*, on the Sabbath; which makes the case very appropriate. David did what was actually forbidden, yet hunger was a sufficient justification, much more might the constructive transgression of the disciples be justified by their hunger. Principle: Works of *necessity* have always been permitted on the Sabbath.

Ver. 5. The priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? Peculiar to Matthew. On the Sabbath the priests must change the shew-bread, and offer double offerings. That construction of the law which condemned His disciples, would condemn this as a profanation, yet the priests were blameless. Works of *necessity* on the Sabbath are not only permitted, but may become a *duty* (see ver. 6).

Ver. 6. One greater. Gr., 'a greater thing,' or 'something greater;' the comparison with the temple occasions this form, although the reference is undoubtedly to Christ Himself. Argument: If the priests in the temple are authorized to profane the Sabbath (according to your view of what that means) in the performance of necessary duties, how much more can One who is the real temple of God on earth authorize His followers to do so; or, if the former are blameless, so are these who have grown hungry in following Him who is greater than the temple. This 'meek and lowly' Teacher asserts this on His own authority. Works of *necessity* become a *duty* on the Sabbath only when so declared by Christ, or as we follow Christ.

Ver. 7. But if ye had known. They ought to have known, pro-

desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath.

9 And he departed thence, and went into their synagogue: and behold, a man having a withered hand.

fessing to interpret the Old Testament.—**I desire mercy**, etc. Quoted before (chap. 9: 13), from Hosea 6: 6. Our Lord properly censures them, after defending His disciples. They did not recognize this greater temple (ver. 6), nor accept the service which God had approved; 'mercy and not sacrifice,' had they done so, they **would not have condemned the guiltless** (the same word as in ver. 5).

Ver. 8. **For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath.** This crowning thought occurs in all three narratives. The emphasis rests on the word 'Lord.' The term 'Son of man' implies His Messiahship. The Jews admitted that the authority of the Messiah was greater than that of the law of the Sabbath, hence this declaration would serve to increase the hostility of the Pharisees. Still the more prominent idea is this: as Son of man, Head and Representative of renewed humanity, our Lord is Lord of the Sabbath. As such He has the right to change the position of the day, but the language points to a perpetuity of the institution. It implies further that a new air of liberty and love will be breathed into it, so that instead of being what it then was, a badge of narrow Jewish feeling and a field for endless hair-splitting about what was lawful and unlawful, it becomes a type and foretaste of heaven, a day when we get nearest our Lord, when we rise most with Him, when our truest humanity is furthered, because we are truly made like the 'Son of man.' See, further, on Mark 2: 27. Lange: 'Christ is Lord of the Sabbath, being Himself the personal Sabbath: all that leads to Him and is done in Him, is Sabbath observance; all that leads from Him is Sabbath-breaking.'

Ver. 9. **And he departed thence.** The miracle which follows took place on another Sabbath (see Luke 6: 6), probably the next one.—**Went into their synagogue.** The synagogue of His opponents, probably in some important town in Galilee. Luke says He taught there, as seems to have been His habit.

Ver. 10. **A man having a withered hand.** It was not only paralyzed, but dried up. According to Luke, the right hand; the language used by Mark implies that this was the effect of accident or disease. There is no evidence that the man was aware that the Pharisees wished to make use of him to accuse Jesus. The Gospel according to the Hebrews represents him as saying: 'I was a mason, seeking sustenance by my hands; I beseech Thee, Jesus, that Thou restore my health, that I may not shamefully beg for food.'—**And they asked him.** The other accounts tell us only of their 'watching' Him, to accuse Him, and lead us to infer that our Lord, knowing their thoughts, took the first active step by calling upon the man to 'stand forth,' and

And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on
 11 the sabbath day? that they might accuse him. And
 he said unto them, What man shall there be of you,
 that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on
 the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it
 12 out? How much then is a man of more value than a
 sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sab-
 13 bath day. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth
 thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was

that then this questioning took place.—**Is it lawful to heal**, etc. This question was put **that they might accuse him**, might find in His teaching and then in the act of mercy, the basis for a formal charge before the local tribunal of which they were themselves members (see ver. 14).

Ver. 11. Luke introduces the reply of this verse on another occasion. It was always appropriate under such circumstances.—**What man**, etc. Such an act of mercy to a beast was allowed and usual then; but the Rabbins afterwards (perhaps on account of this reply) forbade anything more than to 'lay planks' so that the animal could come out of itself. The Talmud teaches (according to Wünsche): 'An animal that is fallen into a well on the Sabbath is to be provided with food in that place, but if this is not possible a cushion and bolster are to be laid there whereby it can mount up; for torturing a beast is forbidden by the Law.'

Ver. 12. **How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?** Some take this as an explanation: 'Of how much more value now is a man than a sheep!' But it is better to regard it as a question. Our Lord recognizes the superiority of man, as well as the superior claims of humanity.—**Wherefore it is lawful**, etc. (Comp. Mark and Luke.) Works of *mercy* on the Sabbath are lawful and right. Hypocrites care more for ceremonies than for their cattle, and more for their cattle than for suffering humanity.

Ver. 13. Mark tells us, that 'they held their peace,' and both he and Luke describe our Lord as looking round upon them (with anger and grief). The manner in which the healing took place gave no legal ground for a charge on account of His actions. He did not touch the man, or even command: be healed, but simply said: **Stretch forth thy hand**. The man had no power to do this, and as in the case of spiritual healing, the act of stretching forth was both the effect and the evidence of Divine power. The man's faith was manifest in his attempt to obey, and that too in the midst of such an assembly. His act was a defiance of them, and yet it was not a forbidden act, so that they could not accuse either the Healer or the healed.

- 14 restored whole, as the other. But the Pharisees went out, and took counsel against him, how they might
 15 destroy him. And Jesus perceiving *it* withdrew from
 16 thence: and many followed him; and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him
 17 known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken
 1 by Isaiah the prophet, saying,
 18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;
 My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:
 I will put my Spirit upon him,
 And he shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.

¹ Or, *through*.

Ver. 14. **But the Pharisees took counsel against him.** 'Held a council' is almost too strong; it was scarcely a formal meeting of the local tribunal, although the consultation was attended by its members. Mark says that 'the Herodians' (or court party) joined in the plot. Some suppose that this was occasioned by the refusal of Jesus to see Herod (Luke 9: 9), but that probably occurred after this time. The hostility to John would make them ready to oppose our Lord, and open to the suggestion of the Pharisees, who were 'filled with madness' (Luke 6: 11).

Ver. 15. **Withdrew.** Not from fear, but to carry out His ministry without interruption from these plotters.—**Many.** 'Multitudes' is to be omitted. It is evident that our Lord did not wish to avoid the people.—**He healed them all**, i. e., all who needed healing, possibly, including spiritual healing also. This verse seems to refer to a definite occasion, and not to be a general description of frequent withdrawals, extending over a considerable period. The very detailed account of Mark (3: 7-12) opposes the latter view.

Ver. 16. **And charged them**, etc. Mark tells of the similar command given to 'evil spirits.' This more general prohibition was probably given to prevent a rupture between His carnal followers and the Pharisees, so early in his ministry.—**Make him known**, as the Messiah.

Ver. 17. **That it might be fulfilled**, etc. While Mark details the occurrences, Matthew only declares that the retirement of our Lord was a fulfilment of prophecy, however contrary to the popular notions about the Messiah.—**Isaiah the prophet.** Chap. 42: 1-4. A translation from the Hebrew, made by the Evangelist. The prophet describes the Messiah as a character of utmost gentleness and tender sympathy.

Ver. 18. **Behold my servant.** The Greek word means both 'son' and 'servant.' Christ as Messiah was obedient as a 'servant'

- 19 He shall not strive, nor cry aloud;
Neither shall any one hear his voice in the streets.
20 A bruised reed shall he not break,
And smoking flax shall he not quench,
Till he send forth judgment unto victory.

and dear as a 'Son.' The latter thought comes into prominence in the next clause: **my beloved**, etc. Comp. the accounts of the baptism (chap. 3: 17) and the transfiguration (chap. 17: 5). On the former occasion there was a direct fulfilment of the words: **I will put my Spirit upon him.—He shall proclaim judgment to the Gentiles**; announce the final judgment to the Gentiles, presenting Himself as the *Judge*. Many from Gentile regions were present at the time just spoken of (Mark 3: 8). Some understand the clause as a prediction that the gospel ('judgment') should be preached to the Gentiles. But this is not exact, and obscures the contrast in the prophecy. The Messiah is the Judge and yet meek.

Ver. 19. **He shall not strive, nor cry aloud.** Not a combatant nor a noisy declaimer in public places, but meek and retiring. (Those who refer 'judgment' to the gospel, take this verse as descriptive of the means by which it was to be extended.) There is also a contrast with 'victory' in ver. 20. He presents Himself as Judge and yet is meek; He is meek, does not strive, and yet shall be victor. The lessons are obvious.

Ver. 20. **A bruised reed**, etc. The reed is a hollow cylinder, so formed that its strength and usefulness are well-nigh lost, if it be bruised. It is also emblematic of feebleness, being easily bruised. The finger points to the state of the sinner as useless and weak, while the word 'bruised' suggests the idea of contrition. Our Lord will not reject feeble, marred but contrite, sinners.—**Smoking flax**. The wick of the lamp which has ceased to burn clearly. Threads of flax were used as wicks. The smoking resulted not from the exhaustion of the oil, but from the fault of the wick. Quenching it would be to throw it away altogether on account of its imperfection. Alford says of the two metaphors: 'A proverbial expression for, "He will not crush the contrite heart, nor extinguish the slightest spark of repentant feeling in the sinner." The former might also be referred to a contrite sinner, the latter to an imperfect believer. The Lord did not use harsh violent measures, but dealt tenderly and gently with all such.—**Till he send forth judgment unto victory**, (in Hebrew, 'unto truth') i. e., till He cause His judgment to end in victory, so that no further conflict will remain. 'Send forth' indicates great power. The gentle mode, characteristic of our Lord personally was to be characteristic of His dealings through His militant people up to the day of final decision, when the Judge shall end the conflict in final, absolute victory. The latter thought is lost, if 'judgment' is taken as meaning 'the gospel.'

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.

CHAPTER 12: 22-50.

Blasphemous Accusation of the Pharisees; they afterwards seek a Sign; the nearest Relatives of Christ.

22 Then was brought unto him ¹one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch
23 that the dumb man spake and saw. And all the mul-

¹ Or, a demoniac.

Ver. 21. **And in his name shall the Gentiles hope.** On the ground of what His name, as the Messiah, implies. Those to whom He presented Himself as Judge would learn to trust Him in consequence of the gentle, patient dealing just spoken of, and more fully brought out in the original prophecy. Matthew here omits part of a verse in Isaiah and paraphrases the part he retains, but without any important variation in sense.

Blasphemous Accusation of the Pharisees; they afterwards seek a Sign; the nearest Relatives of Christ. Vers. 22-50.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE. These occurrences from vers. 22-50 seem to have followed each other in immediate succession. Luke (8: 20) places the last one (vers. 46-50) after the parable of the sower, but Mark (3: 31) gives the same order as Matthew, ver. 46 is more definite as to time than Luke's account, and that occurrence was more likely to have been occasioned by the events here placed before it. The time was immediately after the events narrated in chap. 11; the occurrences intervening between this and the retirement just recorded, being the *choice* of the Twelve; the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the centurion's servant (chap. 8: 5-13), the message of John (chap. 11); and some occurrences mentioned by Luke only (7: 36-8: 3). The position serves to indicate the growing and bolder hostility of the Pharisees, which was answered by the bold and startling words of our Lord, awakening the anxiety for His safety among His relatives, which led to the interruption and discussion of vers. 46-50. Our Lord's stay in Galilee after this was neither continuous nor successful, for except the mission of the Twelve, little occurred there save repeated rejection and retirement. Acceptance or rejection must follow such a presentation of Himself as Jesus here makes.

Ver. 22. **Then.** Indefinite, here meaning 'afterwards.'—**Was brought.** Such an one could not come alone.—**One possessed, etc., or, a 'demoniac,' blind and dumb.** A different case from that mentioned in chap. 9: 32-34. The physical effect of the possession was similar, but more unfortunate: the accusation of the Pharisees was similar, but more blasphemous.

Ver. 23. The effect of such a remarkable miracle on the people was astonishment, and they asked: **Can this be the Son of David?**

titudes were amazed, and said, Is this the son of David? * But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out ¹ devils, but ² by Beelzebub the prince of the ¹ devils. And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself;

* For "Is this the son of David?" read "Can this be the son of David?" [comp. John 4: 29].—*Am. Com.*

¹ Gr. *demons*.

² Or, *in*.

The original indicates an expectation or hope of a *negative* answer (see next verse); so that we must not attribute to the multitude any strong spiritual conviction.

Ver. 24. **But when the Pharisees heard it.** According to Luke, some who were present; according to Mark, 'the scribes which came down from Jerusalem,' probably sent to spy out his actions. A public declaration of war against our Lord on the part of the Pharisees, and an answer to the question of the people (ver. 23). The Pharisees admit the miracles, but explain them in another way as the work of Satan. Consistency required this explanation.—**This man.** 'This fellow' is too strong. 'This,' in the question of the people, was an expression of surprise: the word is here taken up and turned against Jesus.—**But by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.** The word 'devil' is applied to but one person in the Scriptures, namely, Satan. On the word 'Beelzebub,' see chap. 10: 25. The sense 'lord of dung' implies coarse wit. The sense: lord of the habitation, referring to rule over the possessed, agrees well with the phrase here added: 'the prince of demons.' 'By,' literally 'in,' *i. e.*, in intimate fellowship.

Ver. 25. **And knowing their thoughts.** He perceived their very thoughts. Their words had been addressed, not to Him, but in reply to the multitudes (ver. 23).—**Every kingdom divided against itself.** The assertion of the Pharisees assumed that there was 'an organized kingdom of evil with a personal ruler.' Our Lord uses this assumption, as a terrible fact, which, however, proves the absurdity of the charge made against Himself. This organized kingdom of darkness, because it is only evil, is racked with discords and hatred, but against the kingdom of God (ver. 28) it is a unit. The point of the argument here is: not that discords are fatal, which is not always the case, but that an organization which acts against itself, its own distinctive aims, must destroy itself. Their accusation implied this.—The rest of the verse applies the same principle to the smaller organizations of a city and a house.

Ver. 26. **And if Satan casteth out Satan, *i. e.*, himself.** The accusation reduced to an absurdity, namely, that a person is divided against himself. A man might be at war within, but even then the

27 how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I ¹by Beelzebub cast out ²devils, ¹by whom do your sons
 28 cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.
 But if I ¹by the Spirit of God cast out ²devils,
 29 then is the kingdom of God come upon you? Or
 how can one enter into the house of the strong

¹ Or, *in*.² Gr. *demons*.

outward acts would not necessarily be in opposition. Satan is utterly wicked, hence good and evil do not strive within him, and his fighting against himself is not to be imagined. This verse implies: that the Pharisees had called our Lord 'Satan;' that Satan is a person; that he has a kingdom; while the whole argument assumes that this kingdom is in constant antagonism to the kingdom of God. This is brought out more fully afterwards.

Ver. 27. **By whom do your sons, i. e., disciples, cast them out?** 'If casting out devils is an evidence of a league with Satan, then this holds good against your scholars who profess to do it also.' Comp. Acts 13: 13.—**Therefore they shall be your judges.** They shall convict you of partiality. The argument is valid, whether the Jewish exorcists cured or only pretended to do so. It is probable they did exercise some influence; though to no great extent, else the wonder at Christ's power would not have been so great. Our Lord does not hint at any imposture; in every age there has been something analogous and inexplicable, *e. g.*, the Egyptian sorcerers. The existence of 'demoniacs' in those days is proof that supernatural power, *of itself*, is no test of truth.

Ver. 28. **By the Spirit of God, i. e., in union with the Spirit of God.** The contrast with 'Beelzebub' points to a 'Person,' not an influence. The alternative raised by the Pharisees is accepted, namely, such works of power are done either by God or Satan. Then having proved the absurdity of the latter explanation, our Lord declares that the agent is 'the Spirit of God.'—**Then the kingdom of God is come upon you.** 'The kingdom you profess to be waiting for has come upon you suddenly, before you expected it, in spite of your opposition to me.' An assertion that His power was not only Divine, but sufficient to prove him the expected Messiah. This strong charge against them grows directly out of the falsity of theirs against Him.

Ver. 29. **Or.** The course of thought is, 'If I were not the Messiah, stronger than Satan, how could I thus spoil him?'—**Spoil his goods.** The strong man represents Satan; his 'house' the world where he has long reigned; 'his goods,' the possessed or the evil spirits possessing them.—**Spoil his house.** The word 'spoil' here is stronger (*διαρπάσει*) than the one used in the last clause (*ἀρπάσαι*), indicating a complete victory over Satan in this world.

man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the
 30 strong *man*? and then he will spoil his house. He
 that is not with me is against me; and he that gather-
 31 eth not with me scattereth. Therefore I say unto you,
 Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven ¹unto
 men ^{*}; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not
 32 be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word

¹Some ancient authorities read *unto you men*.

^{*}"Unto men" strike out marg.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 30. He that is not with me. The opposition between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan is absolute; it is impossible to be neutral. 'Neutrality' is often the worst 'hostility.' Since these two opposing kingdoms exist, all moral beings must belong to one or the other. Our Lord has proved that He is the stronger, that He is the Messiah, working miracles by the Spirit of God; the alternative is therefore presented in a new form: *Christ* or *Satan*. The Pharisees decided for Satan, and were consistent in their opposition. On the other hand the man of whom the sons of Zebedee complained, because he followed not with them, Luke 9: 50, was fighting the devil in the name of Christ, and was therefore with Him; hence 'he that is not against us is for us.'

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN, vers. 31, 32. Comp. Mark 3: 28; Luke 12: 10; 1 John 5: 16.

Ver. 31. Our Lord, who knew the thoughts of His opposers, now explains the awful meaning of their enmity.—**Therefore I say unto you.** A revelation on the authority of Christ.—**Every sin and blasphemy.** Every sin up to and including blasphemy, with the exception afterwards mentioned. 'Blasphemy,' the worst form of sin: it is malicious evil-speaking against God. Even this may be forgiven if repented of.—**But the blasphemy against the Spirit.** The one exception. 'The Spirit,' of course, means the 'Spirit of God' (ver. 28). 'If one sin only is thus excluded from forgiveness in that "coming age," other sins cannot stand on the same level, and the darkness behind the veil is lit up with at least a gleam of hope' (Plumptre).

Ver. 32. Whosoever shall speak a word, i. e., in passing, not as the result of a determined state of hostility, **against the Son of man**, against Christ in the form of a servant, through ignorance of His real glory, **it shall be forgiven him.** Even this great sin can be pardoned. Even the murderers of Christ were still within the reach of mercy, else Christ would not have prayed for them (Luke 23: 34; comp. the prayer of Stephen, Acts 7: 60). Paul was a 'blasphemer' of Christ and a 'persecutor' of the Christians, but in ignorance; he repented and was pardoned.—**But whosoever shall speak.** The form indicates determined speaking, in the presence of light.—**Against**

against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this¹ world, nor in that

¹ Or, age.

the Holy Spirit. Not the Divine nature of Christ, but the third Person of the Trinity, as the Agent working in the hearts of men, without whom neither forgiveness nor holiness is possible.—**Neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.** 'World,' i. e., æon or age; the present one before the final coming of Christ, the future one dating from that event, and lasting forever. The Jewish nation divided the two by the first coming of the Messiah. The meaning is: *shall NEVER be forgiven*. The strongest passage for the doctrine of eternal punishment, and fearfully severe as a warning to every sinner, yet full of hope to all who have not yet blasphemed and utterly rejected the Holy Spirit as manifested in the words and works of the Saviour. Every conscious sin of a converted Christian is a *sin* against the Holy Spirit who dwells in him (Eph. 4: 30; 1 Thess. 5: 19), but not a *blasphemy* which is the consummation of a persistent opposition to the Spirit. Views of this sin: 1. A *particular sin*, that of deliberately, persistently, and maliciously, in the presence of proper evidence, attributing the works of Christ (whether of physical healing or spiritual deliverance) to diabolical agency, instead of acknowledging the Holy Spirit as the Agent. The accusation of the Pharisees, in this instance, *may* have been such a sin, or a near *approach* to it. The latter is more probable, for Christ prayed for them on the cross that they might be pardoned. It is very different from ordinary and usual opposition to God and Christ, and also from 'grieving' or 'resisting the Holy Spirit.' It cannot be a mere denial of the Divinity of Christ. Those who fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin, give good evidence in their sorrow and grief that they have *not* done so. 2. A *state* of final impenitence and determined, wilful opposition, in the presence of light, to the power of the Holy Spirit, virtually a moral suicide, a killing of the conscience, so that the human spirit is absolutely insusceptible and inaccessible to the influences of the Holy Spirit. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the natural *manifestation* of such a state of the heart. Comp. ver. 34. Vers. 33–35 favor this view, as also the correct reading in Mark 3: 29: 'guilty of an eternal sin,' i. e., a sin which will continue for ever and therefore make pardon impossible. This sin excludes repentance, and therefore it excludes pardon. The punishment is perpetual because the sin is perpetual, not because God's mercy or Christ's merit is insufficient. It is uncertain whether such a state is possible 'in this world,' and we should beware of imputing it to any, but the impossibility of forgiveness is quite evident. The inference from this view is, that all sin must either be repented of and forgiven, or culminate (here or hereafter) in the unpardoned and unpardonable state. 3. Many evangelical German expositors think (with

33 which is to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto

Augustin) that the clause contains a hint of forgiveness in another world, i. e., that all sins will be forgiven, except those which terminate in this sin of final impenitence here or hereafter. This avoids a difficulty in regard to the future state of those to whom Christ has not been offered (infants, heathen, etc.), but neither this passage, nor the other difficult ones (1 Pet. 3: 19; 4: 6), give sufficient ground for announcing it as *taught* in the word of God. It is at best only an *inference* based on a doubtful interpretation of the first clause of verse 31, and the last clause of verse 32. The Scriptures are wisely reserved on the whole question, but justify a charitable *hope* in view of the boundless mercy of God. No man is beyond the reach of salvation who has not committed the unpardonable sin; but there is only *one probation*.

Ver. 33. **Either make the tree good, etc.**—The law of God's creation is: good trees, good fruit; corrupt trees, evil fruit. Judge the tree by its fruit. My works are good, hence I am good; the blasphemous words of the Pharisees show their character. Some explain 'make' as meaning 'exhibit,' 'represent,' but the application is the same.—**For the tree is known by its fruit.** Comp. chap. 7: 20. The mention of this general principle here favors the view that vers. 31, 32 are to be applied to a *state*.

Ver. 34. **Ye offspring (or 'brood') of vipers.** Comp. chap. 8: 7. The meek and lowly Saviour utters these words. The Pharisees were referred to, as the corrupt tree (ver. 33), a poisonous plant; now as poisoning animals. There is probably an allusion to the 'seed of the serpent' (Gen. 3: 15), which is in constant antagonism to 'the seed of the woman.'—**How can ye, etc?** A moral impossibility, for out of the abundance (or 'overflow') of the heart, etc. They had only spoken against Him; but this proves their evil character.

Ver. 35. The thought of ver. 33, in another figure; words are represented as fruits.—**His good treasure.** The words: 'of the heart,' though not in the text (inserted from ver. 34), suggest the correct explanation. The contents of our hearts are known to God alone and partially to ourselves, but our unrestrained utterances show what is laid up there.

Ver. 36. **And I say unto you.** An authoritative revelation, opposed to the common opinion of men, yet preëminently reasonable.

- you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.
- 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
- 38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, ¹ Master, we would see a sign from thee.
- 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the

¹ Or, *Teacher*.

Every idle word, i. e., morally useless. If 'the idle word' must be accounted for, much more the wicked ones spoken on this occasion.

Ver. 37. **For by thy words thou shalt be justified,** declared righteous, acquitted, not made righteous. The word never has the latter sense in the New Testament, but is a forensic, judicial term, the opposite of 'condemn.' Man is justified by faith, as the root-element of his character (Rom. 8: 28); but 'words' (here) and 'works' (James 2: 24) are the manifestations of faith, and as such they enter into the final judgment. Comp. Rom. 2: 6; 2 Cor. 5: 10. The index of character will be the words, not hypocritical ones, although even these speedily reveal their true character, but those coming from the heart (vers. 34, 35). 'By' here points to the true source.—This general principle, far exceeding 'the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,' concludes this discourse. Its awful statements challenge every one: Are you with Christ or against Him; do your words, coming from the heart, confess or deny Him?

Ver. 38. **Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees.** 'Others' (Luke 11: 16); on the same occasion, however.—**Master,** or 'Teacher.' In this instance the term was either a polite formality or used in ironical doubt (Luke: 'tempting him').—**We would see a sign from thee.** Luke: 'from heaven.' They intimated that the miracles of healing were not sufficient evidence; might be attributed to magic or diabolical art. 'A sign from heaven' they would regard as conclusive proof. They either denied that His miracles were 'signs,' or that coming from Him, they could be signs 'from heaven.' Pharisaism admires marvels of power more than miracles of mercy.

Ver. 39. **An evil and adulterous generation.** These Pharisees represent the great part of the Jewish people, who looked for a temporal Deliverer, showing signs from heaven. Here, as in the Old Testament, 'adulterous' means unfaithful to God, idolatrous. Their craving after a sign was a token of the same spirit of apostasy which made them join with heathen idolaters in crucifying Jesus.—**Seeketh after,** craves, demands as essential. Comp. 1 Cor. 1: 22.—**There shall no sign be given to it.** 'No sign,' such as they demanded

- 40 prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the ¹ whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
- 41 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, ²a
- 42 greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold,

¹ Gr. *sea-monster*.² Gr. *more than*.

to confirm their false views of the Messiah.—**The sign of Jonah the prophet.** One great sign would be given, typified in the history of Jonah,—the death and resurrection of Christ. The sign of Messiahship, like the Messiah Himself, was the reverse of their expectations: not a sign ‘from heaven,’ but from ‘the heart of the earth.’

Ver. 40. **In the belly of the whale,** or ‘great fish.’ (Comp. Jonah 1: 17, chap. 2). The Greek (*ketos*) does not necessarily mean a whale (in Gr. *phale*, *phalaina*), but any sea-monster or large creature in the ocean. Here probably a white shark, which reaches an immense size in the Mediterranean and sometimes is said to swallow a horse entire. The miracle consisted in Jonah’s preservation. Our Lord vouches for the main fact, which was at the same time a prophetic symbol of the Resurrection and has left its mark in ancient Christian art.—**So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights.** In round numbers according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time.—**In the heart of the earth.** Either in ‘hades’ or in the ‘grave.’ The first sense accords better with the case of Jonah (2: 2: ‘out of the belly of Sheol,’ i. e., Hades, of which the sea-monster was a symbol); but nothing can be inferred from this respecting the locality of the ‘place of departed spirits.’ Christ’s sepulchre was not strictly in the heart of the earth. ‘The sign of Jonah’ may be traced at some length; the following words of our Lord suggest, that as Jonah emerged to preach repentance to the Gentiles, so He rose to send the gospel to all nations.

Ver. 41. Comp. ch. 11: 21-24. **The men of Nineveh shall rise,** i. e., as witnesses, by their example.—**In the judgment,** on the last day.—**With this generation,** i. e., at the same time, not necessarily against them, although this would be the result.

Ver. 42. **The queen of the south.** The queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10: 1), supposed to be Sabæa, in the southern part of Arabia. Josephus represents her as a queen of Ethiopia, and the Abyssinians claim her as the ancestress of their kings.—**From the ends of the earth.** A common Greek expression for a great distance. A stronger

43 ¹a greater than Solomon is here. But the unclean spirit, when ²he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it
 44 not. Then ²he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when ²he is come, ²he findeth
 45 it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth ²he, and taketh with ³himself seven other spirits more evil than ³himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of the man cometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation.

¹ Gr. *more than*.² Or, *it*.³ Or, *itself*.

case than the last (ver. 41). The Ninevites repented under personal preaching; but the queen of Sheba was attracted from a great distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon.—**A greater than.** A superior Person, a more important message, and greater wisdom. Greater than Jonah, greater than Solomon! What mere man could thus speak of himself without contemptible vanity? This chapter is full of calm assertion of superhuman majesty. Yet the Jews were not attracted, did not even give heed.

Ver. 43. The figure in vers. 43-45 refers primarily to the Jewish people, but is applicable also in the history of Christianity and to individuals (see on ver. 45).—**When.** The original indicates a supposed case.—**Gone out.** How, is altogether immaterial.—**Passeth through waterless places,** *i. e.*, parched, desert regions (in Syria, Arabia, Egypt), such as demons inhabited according to the popular notion. Our Lord's words, while in one sense an accommodation to this view, allude to the place whither the demons go, without stating where it is. The return into the man is against the view that the abode of the wicked is meant; but a state of greater dissatisfaction and unrest is plainly indicated.

Ver. 44. **My house,** *i. e.*, the demoniac.—**He findeth it.** Not in a state of moral purity, but empty of a good tenant; swept of all that would be forbidding to an evil spirit; and garnished, set in order, and adorned, but in a way inviting to the unclean spirit.

Ver. 45. **Then,** seeing this inviting residence.—**Seven other spirits,** etc. To be understood indefinitely, of a more complete and terrible possession; there being no resistance to their entrance. Comp. Luke 8: 2.—**And the last state of that man cometh worse than the first.** Possibly a reference to some well-known case; but the whole is applied directly to the Jews: **Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.** Explanations: 1. The *specific* application to the Jews. The first possession, the early idolatrous tendency of the Jews; the going out, the result of the captivity in Babylon; the emptying, sweeping, and garnishing at their return

46 While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold,
his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to
47 speak to him. ¹And one said unto him, Behold, thy
mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to
48 speak to thee. But he answered and said unto him

¹ Some ancient authorities omit ver. 47.

(Pharisaism, a seeming reformation, but really an invitation to evil influences); the last state, the terrible and infatuated condition of the Jews after they had rejected Christ, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. 2. *General application to the Jews.* 'A process of deterioration, with occasional vicissitudes and fluctuations, but resulting in a state far worse than any that had gone before it' (J. A. Alexander). Both are true; the former is the primary reference. 3. *Application to the history of Christianity.* The Reformation, the casting out of the first evil spirit of idolatry, permitted by Rome, the house 'empty, swept, and garnished: swept and garnished by the decencies of civilization and discoveries of secular knowledge, but empty of living and earnest faith' (Alford); the repossession, the final development of the man of sin. 4. *An application to individuals; external reformation without permanent spiritual results, leading to a 'worse state.'*

Ver. 46. **While he was yet speaking to the multitudes.** This definite expression fixes the occasion. — **His mother and brethren.** On the brethren of our Lord, see chap. 13: 55. — **Stood,** or 'were standing,' **without.** Either outside the crowd or the house; it is not certain that He was in a house. They remained there unsuccessfully (Luke 8: 19), **seeking to speak to him.** A sufficient motive should be looked for. It was probably affectionate solicitude for His safety (see on Mark 3: 21), in consequence of the open rupture with the Pharisees; also for His health, since He had not time to eat (Mark 3: 20). It is uncertain whether His friends really thought He was beside Himself, or only said so to screen Him (Mark 3: 21). They probably did not doubt Him, but mistook their duty, and adopted a worldly policy, which though natural and prompted by genuine affection, deserved the rebuke here implied. In any case the faith of Mary His mother must have grown stronger before the crucifixion. Luke (11: 27, 28) places immediately after the discourse just narrated, the exclamation of a woman, referring to His mother ('Blessed is the womb,' etc.), as if Mary's presence had occasioned it. The response there recorded is similar in character to ver. 50 of this chapter.

Ver. 47. **And one said unto him.** We need not suppose that this unnamed person wished to interrupt the discourse, still less that he would call attention to the humble relatives to prove that Jesus was not the Messiah.

Ver. 48. **Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?**

that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my
 49 brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards
 his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my
 50 brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my
 Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister,
 and mother.

CHAPTER 13: 1-23.

*The Parable of the Sower, and its Interpretation; our
 Lord's Sayings on His Use of Parables.*

13: 1 ON that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat

Implying, not contempt nor carelessness, but that the family relation in His case was peculiar. He was more than man, or was not justified in thus speaking.

Ver. 49. **And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples.** Mark 3: 33: 'He looked round about on them which sat about him,' hence 'disciples' in the wider sense.—**Behold, my mother and my brethren!** *i. e.*, these are as nearly allied and as dear to me (see next verse).

Ver. 50. **For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven.** Mere profession of discipleship does not entitle to such a position. Our Lord does not say how we are enabled to do the will of His Heavenly Father, but makes such a result the criterion.—**He is my brother, and sister, and mother.** The term 'father' is excluded; his 'Father' is 'in heaven.' Our Lord loved His relatives, but all whom He teaches ('His disciples') and saves ('do the will of my Father'), whosoever they are, stand equally near Him. Christ loves His people with a love *human* as well as Divine; there can be no closer relationship to Him than that of real discipleship which manifests itself in this obedience to His Heavenly Father. Christ was 'the Son of man' as well as 'the Son of Mary,' identified with humanity in one sense, even more than with her. Those who have not seen Jesus on earth, are here assured of His presence and affection in a way that should be a constant stimulant to holiness. Brethren of Christ are brethren to each other. The dearest and best of friends and relatives, so often needlessly anxious about us, have no claims upon us superior to our duties to the gospel of the Kingdom.

The Seven Parables Respecting the Kingdom of Heaven. Chap. 13: 1-52.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE. The Evangelist has just represented our Lord in opposition to the Pharisees. (A few events probably intervened; see Luke 11: 1-13:). Thus His claims as the Messiah came out more fully. Instruction as to the nature of His kingdom naturally followed; but in view of the opposition already encountered, the best method was by parables.

A parable means literally placing side by side, hence a companion. In the wide sense it includes all illustrations from analogy and all kinds of proverbial sayings. In the strict and technical sense, it is a species of didactic poetry, a fictitious but probable narrative taken from nature or human life for the purpose of illustrating a higher spiritual truth. It presupposes an analogy or correspondence between the book of nature and the book of revelation. It differs (1) from a mere *simile* or *metaphor*, which is not a narration; (2) from a *fable* (two fables occur in the Old Testament; Judg. 4: 8 15; 2 Kings 14: 9; but both are given as purely human productions), which is not within the limits of probability, nor designed to teach spiritual truth, but a maxim of worldly prudence; (3) from a *myth* which is an unconscious fiction and told as the truth, while the design of the parable is evident; (4) from a *proverb*, which is briefer and which may not contain a figure; (5) from an *allegory*, which is self-interpreting, the imaginary persons receiving names, performing actions which declare the meaning, so that allegory is less natural than parable. (On type, symbol, and allegory, as elements of the parable, see Lange, *Matthew*, pp. 234-235).

The parable was a favorite mode of rabbinical instruction, and was usually introduced by some such formula as 'To what is the matter like?' But the parables of Christ far exceed in wisdom and beauty those of the Talmud, and are an inexhaustible mine of instruction. They are miracles of teaching, as His miracles are parables in action.

The purpose of our Lord in teaching by parables was twofold (vers. 10-17): to *reveal* and to *conceal* the truth. To *reveal* to those who really sought the truth; to *conceal* from those who did not desire such knowledge; thus rewarding the former and punishing the latter. The purpose of concealing is plainly stated by our Lord Himself, and may have been in mercy, since it prevented a greater perverting of the truth to their condemnation. The Pharisees were plotting to kill Him; His disciples required much more instruction before He could leave them; hence a method involving this twofold purpose was not only gracious and just, but prudent also. The Old Testament parable, spoken by Nathan (2 Sam. 12: 1-6), also concealed and revealed; it called forth from David an unprejudiced judgment on his own conduct, and then produced conviction of sin. This special purpose is also evident in a few of our Lord's parables, *e. g.*, that spoken in the house of Simon (Luke 7: 41, 42).

Parables may be pressed too far; the general truth is always the central one; others are usually involved, but only *as related to it*. Resemblances which we discover at every point, although founded on analogies which God has created, are not to be placed on a level with what our Lord distinctly teaches. The uninspired lessons *from* the parables exceed in number the inspired lessons *of* the parables. The former include *possible* meanings, the latter *necessary* ones. The former may be used to enforce truth revealed elsewhere, the latter are revelations of truth. Seeking the many lessons makes us rich in spiritual knowledge, grasping the necessary one makes us confident.

The *seven parables* of this chapter are a string of precious pearls strung upon a single thread. They seem to have been spoken on one occasion, and they relate to one definite subject. The natural and easy transition in the order, the advance in thought, cannot be accidental. They present the development of the kingdom of heaven in its conflict with the world, bringing out its lights and shadows. 'Accordingly we cannot fail to trace in the parable of the sower a picture of the apostolic age; in the parable of the tares, the ancient Catholic Church springing up in the midst of heresies; in the parable of the mustard bush, resorted to by the birds of the air as if it were a tree, and loaded with their nests, a representation of the secular state-Church under Constantine

2 by the sea side. And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and

the Great; in the leaven that is mixed among the three measures of meal, the pervading and transforming influence of Christianity in the mediæval Church, among the barbarous races of Europe; in the parable of the treasure in the field, the period of the Reformation; in the parable of the pearl, the contrast between Christianity and the acquisitions of modern secular culture; and in the last parable, a picture of the closing judgment.' Lange.

Other applications, however true, should never ignore the original one, out of which they grow. All, however, are always instructive and applicable. The history of the kingdom as a whole finds its counterpart in the experience of each of its subjects, and in every period of its development. They remain 'like apples of gold in pictures of silver,' the gospel to the poor, to children, and yet inexhaustible in meaning.

The Parable of the Sower, and its Interpretation; our Lord's Sayings on His Use of Parables, vers. 1-23.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 4: 1-9; Luke 8: 4-8. The occasion (ver. 1); the scene (ver. 2); the first parable (vers. 3-9); the question of the disciples (ver. 10); the two-fold answer: (1) why He taught in parables (vers. 11-17); (2) what He taught in this parable (vers. 18-23). The parable which begins the discourse refers primarily to the beginnings of Christianity. The generous sowing of the Apostolic age; though the hearers differ, the sowing always the same; with good seed, a full hand and a wide reach.—The four classes of hearers, the same in every age. The unfruitful hearers: the *first* class, careless, corrupt, utterly hardened; the *second*, enthusiastic, but fickle, full of feeling, not of faith; the *third*, earnest, but legal, self-seeking, serious minded worldlings—the worst of the three, though often awakening most hope. The first have the faults of childhood; the second, of youth; the third, of more mature years. The good ground; broken up, deeply stirred, cleared of thorns. The proportion of fruit varies, but the whole is fruitful. Historical application: 1. The Jews (who failed to receive the word); 2. The Greeks (short-lived in their devotion); 3. The Romans (choked by temporal power); 4. As we hope, the Teutonic races (thus far the most fruitful). 'The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: 1. Revealed by Christ, as they are revealed in Christ; 2. Revealed to faith, concealed from unbelief; 3. To one class God freely gives; to the other He denies, the responsibility is theirs; 4. Willingness to receive leads to abundance, unwillingness results in inability; 5. The new revelation fulfils the Old Testament (vers 14, 15), yet far exceeds it in the privilege it bestows (vers. 16, 17). The longing of the Old Testament saints, the privilege of Christians.

Ver. 1. On that day. Probably, but not certainly, the same day. The interval was brief in any case. Comp., however, Luke 11, 12.—**Out of the house.** If a particular house is meant, that in which 'his mother and brethren' sought Him (chap. 12: 46).—**The sea-side,** the shore of the Lake of Galilee.

Ver. 2. Great multitudes. Comp. Mark 4: 1; Luke 7: 4.—**A boat.** Comp. the previous occasion (Mark 3: 9), when 'he spake

3 sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach. And he spake to them many things in parables, saying,
4 Behold, the Sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the birds came
5 and devoured them: and others fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth; and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of
6 earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
7 And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns

to His disciples that a small boat should wait on him, because of the crowd, lest they should throng him.' The people **stood on the beach**, in order to hear Him. From the boat, the first four parables were spoken; the other three, to the disciples in the house.

Ver. 3. **Many things.** Out of the 'many,' Matthew selects these parables; for this selection we seek a reason (see note on the whole discourse).—**Behold**, calling attention to what follows, not to some object in sight, which would have distracted attention from the parable. But the scene was quite familiar to the hearers: the waving grain field with the various kinds of soil, the hard-trodden paths beneath, the fluttering birds above, the golden ears.—**The sower**, standing for the class; **went forth**, *i. e.*, as usual, pointing rather to a supposed case, than to something occurring before their eyes.

Ver. 4. **By the way side.** The paths or roads pass close to the edge of the ploughed ground in unenclosed fields; or the reference may be to the path across the field on which the sower walked as he sowed. In any case the seed was exposed, and quickly picked up by the birds. All these kinds of soil can be actually seen on the Lake of Gennesaret in one and the same open field.

Ver. 5. **Upon the rocky places.** Not full of stones, but thin soil over rocks.—**Straightway they sprang up, because**, etc. The greater heat of the shallow soil would cause a rapid growth upwards.

Ver. 6. **Scorched**, or 'burnt.' The heat of the sun, so necessary to vegetable life, did this; but the effect must be connected with the cause: **they had no root**. Plants need both sunshine and moisture; they get the first from their growth above ground, the second from their growth below ground; the root, however, being the principal channel of nourishment (comp. Luke: 'moisture'). Hence these **withered away**.

Ver. 7. **Upon the thorns**, *i. e.*, upon soil where there were roots of thorns, etc., not necessarily among thorn-bushes.—**And the thorns grew up and choked them**. The thorns were of ranker growth. Both ideas are implied in the phrase 'sprung up.'

- 8 grew up, and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, 9 some sixty, some thirty. He that hath ears,¹ let him hear.
- 10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why 11 speakest thou unto them in parables? And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to

¹ Some ancient authorities add here, and in ver. 43, *to hear*: as in Mark 4: 9; Luke 8: 8.

Ver. 8. **Good ground.** The proportion of the harvest is large, but not unexampled. Palestine was once exceedingly fertile, and might be so now with a good government and an industrious population. The remarkable variety in the form of the parallel passages shows independence.

Ver. 9. **He that hath ears.** Comp. chap. 11: 15. A peculiarly appropriate ending to a parable. It here refers to the understanding of the parable.

Ver. 10. **The disciples,** more than the Twelve (Mark 4: 10). Evidently this method of instruction had not been used by our Lord to any great extent before this discourse. Mark and Luke omit the question.

Ver. 11. **Unto you it is given.** 'Unto you' is emphatic. A gift of God is here said to be bestowed on one class of hearers (you), and not bestowed on another (them).—**To know.** Without this gift there could not be proper knowledge of the truth to be conveyed by the parable. The two classes are, as in this case, separated by their own choice. God's good pleasure, the ultimate ground, involves the free choice of the persons concerned.—**The mysteries.** A mystery is not necessarily something inscrutable in its nature, but it may be that which is unknown to man in his natural condition before it is revealed to him by God. The mysteriousness arises mainly from the sinful state of man: yet God, for wise purposes, often withholds the revelation without which these things remain 'mysteries.' The great mystery is Christ Himself (1 Tim. 3: 16), making peace between God and man, between man and man (Jew and Gentile; Eph. 3: 4-11). This was not fully revealed to the Apostles until long after the death of Christ, although they already had clearer views than the mass of the people. Where this gospel mystery has been preached, sin alone hides it from men; however much may remain not fully revealed to us.—**Of the kingdom of heaven.** These parables relate to the kingdom of Christ as a whole.—**It is not given.** They hear the parables as parables, not as vehicles of spiritual truth.

12 them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away
13 even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing
14 they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand:

And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:

Ver. 12. Mark and Luke put this verse after the exposition of the parable of the sower.—**For whosoever hath.** Applied more generally in chap. 25: 29. A rule of God's dealings with men, holding good even in the lower forms of creation; here to be applied to knowledge of spiritual things. The phrase: **from him shall be taken away even that which he hath**, points to a seeming or supposed knowledge. This twofold result is not arbitrary, but a necessary development, akin to what we perceive in every form of growth. To the disciples, with a desire for spiritual knowledge, an interpretation was *given*, and their knowledge grew through the outward and inward revelation; the people, without this desire, did not hear the interpretation, consequently they had less and less spiritual apprehension of the truth they possessed as Jews, since they got further away from Christ who alone fulfilled and explained the truth.

Ver. 13. **Therefore.** According to the principle just mentioned.—**Because seeing they see not.** Here the reason is based on the character of the persons concerned; Mark and Luke emphasize the purpose, namely, that this state of ignorance should go on unchecked to work out its own results. The two thoughts can be distinguished, but not divided. The paradoxical form points to merely external perception without consequent mental or moral results. The blindness of the Jews was judicial blindness, which reached its height in their rejection of Christ.

Ver. 14. **Unto them**, 'in their case.'—**Is fulfilled.** A stronger word than that commonly used; a complete fulfilment, which may or may not have been preceded by a partial one.—**Isaiah** (6: 9, 10, from the Septuagint version). Quoted in John 12: 40; Acts 28: 26, 27; comp. Rom. 11: 8; referred to by Mark and Luke, but not formally quoted.—**By hearing**, etc. The sense of the original prophecy is given, but not its form. In Isaiah is a command; here a strong prediction, indicating that judgment is a result of what is done *by man* as well as what is done *to man*.

- 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross,
 And their ears are dull of hearing,
 And their eyes they have closed;
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart,
 And should turn again,
 And I should should heal them.
- 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your
 17 ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that
 many prophets and righteous men desired to see the
 things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear
 18 the things which ye hear, and heard them not. Hear

Ver. 15. **For this people's heart.** A more exact quotation, but changed into a prediction.—**Waxed gross**, become fat, carnal, losing its spiritual life.—**Their eyes they have closed**; a persistent course of action. **Lest haply**. What they would not do, was what they at length could not do. The result of their own doings fulfilled God's righteous judicial purpose; but the blame was theirs. The parables themselves betokened the existence of this state of things both as a result and as a punishment.

Ver. 16. **But blessed are your eyes.** 'Your' is emphatic; 'your eyes, blessed are they,' etc.

Ver. 17. **That many prophets**, etc. Over against the responsibility of the ignorant (vers. 13-15), prominence is given to the great and unmerited privilege of the disciples. They were permitted to see and know what had been denied even to inspired and good men who longed for such knowledge.—**Righteous men**, not merely according to the law, but who longed for something higher, with the anticipative faith here implied.—**Desired to see the things which ye see** (a stronger word, meaning 'to gaze upon'), **and saw them not**. The privilege of the disciples exceeded not only the privilege, but even the desire of these good men of former times. Hence all was of grace. 'The people of Israel were emphatically men of desires. They saw afar off the glory of the kingdom of the latter days. Each stood on a Pisgah height, and looked on the vision of a land he was not to enter.' (Plumptre.) Comp. 1 Pet. 1: 10; Heb. 11: 16.

Ver. 18. **Hear then ye.** 'Hear, in your hearts, ye who are so highly favored, the true meaning of these parables.' Our Lord's explanation is to guide us in the interpretation of other parables. He does not say: it teaches this general principle, nor does He give a significance to all the objects and actions which may be linked with sowing in a grain-field.

19 then ye the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, *then* cometh the evil *one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he
20 that was sown by the way side. And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth
21 the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because
22 of the word, straightway he stumbleth. And he that

Ver. 19. **The word of the kingdom.** This is the seed (comp. Mark 4: 14; Luke 8: 11); the sower being Christ (ver. 37), Himself and His ministers (1 Cor. 3: 6). The *spoken* word is made most prominent, as this was almost the only means used in the Apostolic age, to which this parable primarily refers.—**Understandeth it not.** Active, personal apprehension is involved.—**Then cometh the evil one** ('Satan,' Mark; 'the devil,' Luke) **and snatcheth away.** Almost during the act of hearing. This is done through 'birds,' passing thoughts and desires; the purpose being 'lest they should believe and be saved' (Luke 8: 12). The immediate cause is hardness of the soil. Christ speaks here of a personal devil in a didactic manner.—**This is he that was sown by the wayside**, not, 'he which receiveth seed.' The form used throughout points, not to the ground, but to the result of the sowing in the different cases as representing the different classes of hearers. Here there may also be a hint that the loss of the seed is the loss of real life, avoiding, however, the thought that Satan could really keep the word of God itself. This apparent mixing of metaphors should caution us against pressing the analogies too far.

Ver. 20. **Straightway receiveth it with joy.** The effect is immediate and apparently good; but beneath the surface easily stirred, is a soil harder than the trodden path. Great joy without deep spiritual conviction or conflict.

Ver. 21. **Yet hath he not root in himself.** His apparent Christian life is rooted only in the temporary excitement about him.—**Endureth for a while.** The expression implies also: 'is the creature of circumstances.'—**Tribulation**, afflictions; **persecution**, a special form of affliction; all arising **because of the word**, and intended to strengthen, as the sunshine the plant; but the plant without root is withered.—**Straightway** (as in the reception of the word) **he stumbleth**, or 'taketh offence and falleth.' Sentimental, superficial, changeful, one-sided professors of Christianity. The parable does not decide whether such have really been subjects of grace.

Ver. 22. The *third class* hold out longer, but are unfruitful, from a divided heart, in which evil triumphs; the thorns being hardier than

was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the ¹world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

CHAPTER 13: 24-43.

The Second, Third and Fourth Parables; with the Interpretation of the Second, in the House.

24 Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed

¹ Or, age.

the wheat.—**The care of the world**, not pure worldliness, which belongs to the first class, but anxieties about worldly things distracting persons of serious mind.—**The deceitfulness of riches**. Whether in the pursuit or possession of wealth. A false expectation or a false confidence in regard to wealth will **choke the word**. Mark adds: 'the lusts of other things,' other than those presented by the word.—**He becometh unfruitful**. Notwithstanding the previous (and perhaps long continued) promise of fruit.

Ver. 23. **The good ground**. This has been prepared. All is of divine grace, yet the verse plainly teaches that the persons referred to *actively* and *willingly* accept and understand the truth; the result being continued fruitfulness. The degrees vary, since characters and capacities and gifts vary. This class alone fulfils the purpose of the sower.

The soil comes from God. But good soil can be made better, and even bad soil may be improved by cultivation. The preacher should prepare the soil as well as sow the seed. On the other hand, the best soil may degenerate by neglect, and become a desert, like the once fertile shores of the lake of Galilee, where this parable was spoken.

The Second, Third and Fourth Parables; with the Interpretation of the Second, in the House. Vers. 24-43.

CONTENTS. The three other parables spoken in public (vers. 24-33), with the interpretation of the parable of the tares in private (vers. 36-43). The Evangelist inserts, as is his habit, a prophecy fulfilled by this method of instructing the multitude (vers. 34, 35).—The parable of the tares follows that of the sower; the development of evil is soon apparent; it was foretold to prevent discouragement. The third and fourth, setting forth the expansive and permeating power of the kingdom of heaven, were an assu-

25 good seed in his field : but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed ¹tares also among the wheat,

¹ Or, darnel.

rance that the tares would not dispossess the wheat.—The historical application of the parable of the tares, is to the early days of Christianity, when evil tendencies, not yet rooted up, manifested themselves. It has an application for every succeeding age; not however as a whole to individuals. Its various parts enjoin: zeal in extending the gospel over the world, vigilance against Satan, patience in the midst of recognized evil, hope of final triumph for Christ's cause. The final scene is impressive. The Son of man who here speaks will send forth the reapers at the end of the world, separate the good from the bad, reward the one and punish the other.—The parables of the mustard-seed and of the leaven, form a pair: both pointing to the growth of Christianity from small beginnings; the former presenting its *extensive* power, in consequence of its inherent capacity for development; the latter its *intensive* power, all the more pervasive because noiseless. The historical application of the one is to the rapid extension of Christianity in the early centuries; of the other, to its gradual and hidden effects on humanity, especially among barbarous nations in the Dark Ages. The individual application of the former is not prominent; it encourages by showing that the beginnings of grace in the heart are small, and by asserting its rapid extension. The parable of the leaven points directly to the mystery of regeneration transforming the soul.—For other lessons see comments.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES, 24–31.

Ver. 24. **Set he before them.** With the double purpose already spoken of; the word being often used in reference to food.—**The kingdom of heaven.** The subject in all seven parables. — Christ's reign in the new economy of salvation.—**Is likened,** or 'made like.' Not 'is like,' as in the succeeding parables. Nor 'by others who used this parable before.' The speedy establishment of the kingdom is implied; hence this parable is referred to the first stage of Christianity.—**Good Seed,** i. e., of a good kind and good of its kind.—**His field.** The 'world,' i. e., mankind. is 'His,' though the devil works in it. This parable figures largely in the Donatist controversy, which turned on the question, whether the 'field' was the ungodly world (as the Donatists in the interest of strict discipline maintained), or the church (as Augustine and the Catholics contended). See ver. 38.

Ver. 25. **But while men slept,** i. e., 'at night,' the opportune time for such an act of malice. No censure of the servants is expressed; though their natural weakness may be implied. The times of security are times of danger, but the best ministers cannot prevent the mischief of Satan; there was a traitor even among the disciples of Christ's own selection.—**His enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat.** 'Tares,' 'darnel' (*lolium temulentum*), or bastard wheat, looking like wheat, but with a fruit which is injurious in its effects, and produces vomiting, convulsions, and even death. Very often the roots of the wheat and the darnel 'are so intertwined that it is impos-

- 26 and went away. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.
 27 And the ¹servants of the household came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy
 28 field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, ²An enemy hath done this. And the ¹servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather
 29 them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them.
 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.
 31 Another parable set he before them, saying, The

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.² Gr. *A man that is an enemy*.

sible to separate them without plucking both up' (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*). The grains of the darnel are black, and smaller than those of the wheat, and can easily be separated by sifting. An act of malice or revenge, not uncommon in the East.—**Went away.** The hostile sowing required no further care; in the beginnings of evil Satan conceals himself, or assumes the garb of an angel of light. He appears here as the ape of Christ, mimicking and counterfeiting His work. Chrysostom: 'After the prophets the false prophets; after the apostles the false apostles; after Christ, Antichrist.'

Ver. 26. **Then appeared the tares also.** After a time, and at a time of promise in the wheat, the evil result of the malicious sowing is apparent. The world is growing both better and worse: wheat and poisonous tares are maturing together for the final harvest (ver. 30).

Vers. 27, 28. Simple life-like dialogue. The servants in perplexity resort to the master of the house, who checks their impatient zeal. 'The servants' represent the zealous pastors, and are distinct from 'the reapers' (the angels, ver. 41).

Vers. 29, 30. **Lest haply while ye gather up, etc.** The answer of a wise and patient husbandman. The servants might distinguish the two, but their roots were intertwined. When harvest came and the stalks were dry, the separation was easier, and with less risk of injuring the wheat. Impatient zeal for purity in the Church has often rooted up the wheat, and done more harm than good. This may be applied to the persecution of heretics.

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND OF THE LEAVEN, 31-33. Parallel passages: Mark 4: 30, 32; Luke 13: 19-21.

Ver. 31. *A third parable*, also from agricultural experience.—▲

kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 which indeed is less than all seeds: but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman

grain of mustard seed. The plant grows wild, but was often found in the gardens of the Jews. In the fertile soil of Palestine it reached the height of several feet. Dr. Thomson informs me that he measured one mustard plant on the east of the Jordan that was fourteen feet high. 'A grain of mustard seed' was the proverbial expression for the smallest thing conceivable (comp. chap. 17: 20).—**Took.** Probably a hint that the small seed must be taken up carefully or it would be lost.

Ver. 32. **Less than all seeds, i. e.,** those sown by the Jews.—**Greater than the herbs.** The literal meaning leaves it uncertain whether the plant referred to was itself an herb. The main point is the rapid growth from a diminutive seed.—**The birds of the heaven** (the air) represent the external adherents of the kingdom, nations nominally Christian; oftentimes 'outward church form,' since the kingdom itself is not the Church organization, but wider and deeper.—**Lodge in the branches thereof.** Seeking shelter and remaining there. The permanent external adhesion is thus indicated. The history of missions is a continuous commentary on this parable, especially the growth of the little pentecostal band of disciples which soon spread over the Roman empire.

Ver. 33. **Leaven.** In those days a piece of the leavened loaf was put amongst the new dough to cause fermentation. This illustrates the power of pervading and assimilating foreign substances. The figure is generally applied to evil influences, but here to gracious ones. See below.—**A woman.** There may be no significance in this part of the figure, though some find in it a reference to the Church.—**Took and hid.** Two important points: 'took,' from without; 'and hid,' i. e., put it where it seemed lost in the larger mass.—**Three measures of meal,** the usual amount taken for one baking, an ephah (comp. Gen. 18: 6; Judges 6: 19; 1 Sam. 1: 24). A large mass is to be pervaded and assimilated by the small piece of leaven. 'Three' is not necessarily significant, though referred by some to body, soul, and spirit; by others to the three faculties, cognition, emotion, and volition, by still others to the Jew, the Greek, and the Barbarian, or to the three sons of Noah. The main point is that the *whole* man individually and the *whole* human society in all its ramifications shall be transformed and sanctified by the spirit of the gospel.—**Till it was all**

took, and hid in three ¹ measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

- 34 All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing
 35 unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken ² by the prophet, saying,
 I will open my mouth in parables;
 I will utter things hidden from the foundation
³ of the world.

- 36 Then he left the multitudes, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

¹ The word in the Greek denotes the Hebrew shea, a measure containing nearly a peck and a half.

² Or, *through*.

³ Many ancient authorities omit *of the world*.

leavened. The length of time not indicated: the transformation of the whole mass is the one fact stated. This influence triumphs. 'Leaven' therefore does not represent *evil* here, as is usually the case. The parables indeed affirm a development of evil side by side with that of the kingdom, but the kingdom itself 'is like leaven.' Leaven is used in a good sense (Lev. 23: 17); in household economy it has a wholesome influence. The parable indicates that the influence is internal and noiseless, not dependent upon external organization so much as upon quiet personal agency and example, since the leaven transforms the dough lying next, until it is 'all leavened.' The last clause is not to be interpreted absolutely, since an evil development is set forth in the second and seventh parables, and hinted at in the third.

Ver. 34. And without a parable spake he nothing unto them. On that occasion; probably true also of the *subject* of discourse, the kingdom of heaven.

Ver. 35. That, i. e., 'in order that.'—**The prophet.** From Ps. 78: 2, the author of which was Asaph, 'the seer' (2 Chron. 29: 30), or prophet. The Psalm is a historical survey of God's dealings with Israel from the time of the Exodus to that of David, but the events it mentions have a reference to Christ (comp. 1 Cor. 10: 6, 11, where the same events are spoken of).

EXPLANATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE TARES, 36-43.

Ver. 36. Into the house. Probably His usual residence. The purpose was to explain the parables more fully and to add others for the benefit of **His disciples** that were about Him, with the Twelve; Mark iv. 10.—**The parable of the tares** would be less likely to be understood by the multitudes.

37 And he answered and said, He that soweth the good
 38 seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world;
 and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom;
 39 and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the
 enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest
 is ¹ the end of the world; and the reapers are angels.

¹ Or, *the consummation of the age.*

Ver. 37. The Son of man. Christ Himself. Our Lord uses the present tense, but this does not forbid an application to later events, in which Christ is represented by those who preach Him.

Ver. 38. The field is the world. 'His field' (ver. 24), hence some would limit this to the Church. But in that case the parable would not differ from the last of the series. The phrase can only mean the Church, as the Church is seeking to occupy the whole human world. In God's will and design the Church is co-extensive with the human race. The gospel is good seed to be scattered everywhere; the intertwining of the roots suggests that the tares are *in* the Church also, as indeed ver. 41 plainly intimates, but they are not *of* the Church. — **The sons of the kingdom—the sons of the evil one.** The reference is to persons who represent and embody the two opposing influences and developments. In the world and in the Church both as an organized body and as engaged in its missionary enterprises, there exist side by side two such classes; those made heirs of Christ's kingdom by Divine sowing and those who are of the seed of the serpent.

Ver. 39. The devil is here represented as the author of evil in the world (and in the Church as affected by the world).—Here again as in ver. 19 Christ speaks not figuratively, but didactically, of the devil as a real person (not simply as a principle or influence).—**The harvest**, up to which time the tares are to be left, **is the end of the world.** The phrase may be rendered: 'the consummation of the age.' According to Jewish notions the coming of the Messiah was to be the end of the present age. Our Lord and His Apostles refer the Jewish phrase to the *second* coming of the Messiah. Our Lord does not interpret more fully the conversation of the servants and the householder (vers. 27-29). Where He has been silent, controversy has been loudest. The application to the question of discipline has been hotly discussed from the fourth century until now. The parable assumes that earnest Christians will be zealous to remove impurities and offences (from the Church and the world as well) by forcible means. Without positively forbidding this, which may at times be absolutely necessary, the whole drift of the parable enjoins caution and charity. Brute force, persecution, whether civil (rooting out of the world) or ecclesiastical (rooting out of the Church) finds little warrant here, and has generally resulted in actually tearing up the wheat. As regards dis-

40 As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in ¹the end of the world.
 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause
 42 stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weep-
 43 ing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.

¹ Or, *the consummation of the age.*

cipline; when necessary, it is to be exercised with a prudential, not a punitive purpose. The case is much simplified, when the Church is free, and not compelled by alliance with the State to allow wheat and tares to intertwine yet more closely.

Ver. 40. The destruction of the wicked is first declared; it is to take place **at the end of the world**, i.e., of the present order of things.

Ver. 41. **The Son of man.** Christ Himself is Lord of angels and Ruler in this kingdom.—**Out of his kingdom.** The angels sent forth by Christ will accomplish what men could not do, ought not to attempt to do, namely, remove all evil from the Church and from the world, which will stand only so long as the purpose of the kingdom requires it. This ministry of the angels on the resurrection day is hinted at by Daniel (7: 9, 10, 18; 12: 1, 2).—**All things that cause stumbling**, lit., ‘scandals,’ or ‘stumbling blocks.’ As punishment is spoken of, this must refer to persons who cause others to stumble and fall. (In ch. 16: 30 Peter is called a ‘scandal.’)—**And them that do iniquity.** This class includes the former and yet more. How long this gathering out will continue is not stated.

Ver. 42. **And shall cast them**, etc. As the tares were burned, this may be figurative, but it undoubtedly refers to real and terrible sufferings in Gehenna, resulting not simply from the circumstances of the evil doers in a future state, but from their character.—**There shall be the weeping.** Comp. note on chap. 8: 12. These awful words must mean something positive and punitive.

Ver. 43. **Then shall the righteous shine forth.** Comp. Dan. 12: 3; Prov. 4: 18. The gospel tells us how men become ‘righteous.’ As such they have a glory, a light which is here obscured, but shall then burst forth as Christ’s glory shall appear.—**In the kingdom of their Father.** The righteous being God’s adopted sons, He is ‘their Father.’ This kingdom of final glory seems to be distinguished from the mediatorial kingdom of Christ spoken of throughout the chapter; comp. 1 Cor. 15: 24.—**He that hath ears**, etc. This conclusion befits the importance of the parable. The prophecy respecting the des-

CHAPTER 13: 44-52.

*The Three Parables spoken to the Disciples in the House ;
the Conclusion of the Discourse.*

- 44 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid-
den in the field ; which a man found, and hid ; and
¹in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath, and
buyeth that field.

¹ Or, for joy thereof.

tiny of all men deserves the attention of all men. Yet even on this point many have no ears to hear.

*The Three Parables spoken to the Disciples in the House ; the Conclusion
of the Discourse, vers. 44-52.*

CONTENTS. These three parables relate mainly to human effort in the development of the kingdom of heaven. The last one corresponds to the second, while the fifth and sixth form a pair; the transition of thought being easy and natural in every case. —*The Hidden Treasure* (ver. 44), finding without seeking; *The Pearl of Great Price* (vers. 45, 46), seeking and finding; in both cases, proper effort to appropriate the valuable possession; *The Net cast into the Sea* (vers. 47-50), the Church and her efforts, the mixed result and the final separation. Application in the form of a comparison (vers. 51, 52).

THE PARABLE OF THE TREASURE IN THE FIELD.

Ver. 41. **A treasure hidden in the field.** The inestimable value of the kingdom of heaven, but concealed to the eyes of the world. It is possible that our Lord refers to some case of 'treasure trove,' which had lately occurred. The people in Palestine even now have a strange passion for treasure-seeking, and 'not a few spend their last farthing in these ruinous efforts' (Thomson). Valuables which are, with us, intrusted to bankers, are in the East buried in fields and gardens to save them from robbers and accidents.—**In his joy.** Natural to those who find unexpectedly. The legality or morality of the transaction does not enter into the discussion; the man who had made this discovery used all the means in his power to possess himself of the treasure. This suggests the general application and lesson. Notice: He obtained the 'treasure,' worth more than he could pay, and also 'the field,' which he could buy. In this result the parable differs from the next. Many, therefore, refer 'the field' to the external Church, in which a man may, as it were, stumble on the treasure of true religion; he naturally possesses himself also of the means of grace, the external forms of the Church.—We may aptly apply it historically to the days of persecution, and again to the days of the Reformation, when true religion was sought and obtained at the cost of everything; the discovery of the treasure was apparently accidental, and great joy attended it.

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man
46 that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having
found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all
that he had, and bought it.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a ¹net,
that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:
48 which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach;

¹ Gr. *drag-net*.

The Parable of the Pearl.

Ver. 45. **Merchant seeking goodly pearls.** One who is making it his business to seek what is valuable, what is true and right. Pearls were then esteemed as the costliest ornaments, and were brought from the shores of the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean.

Ver. 46. **One pearl of great price.** Christ Himself, not religion; when this pearl becomes ours, we have true religion. The seeker finds and obtains the pearl in its purity. No mention is made of joy in this case, since this is more characteristic of those who make the discovery without seeking. This parable is exemplified in the lives of the Apostles, of Justin Martyr, St. Augustine, and many saints. It has also a wider *historical* application to the present age of investigation and discovery. True science seeks goodly pearls, and leads to the discovery of the one pearl of great price. The two parables refer to two different classes of persons; yet both make a discovery, both strive to make the treasure their own at every cost. The seeker is perhaps the superior character, and obtains the superior treasure. We may hope for a purer Christianity as the result of intense and earnest investigation; yet the whole discourse shows that side by side with this we must expect an intense and earnest search in the interest of Satan's kingdom.

The Parable of the Net.

Ver. 47. **A net, that was cast into the sea.** A drag-net or seine is meant (not a casting net, as in 4: 18). Appropriate for an audience largely made up of fishermen. The parable resembles that of the tares; that, however, represents the two developments of good and evil, side by side in the world (and in the Church); this one is applicable rather to the missionary *effort* of the Church. 'The sea' is a Scriptural figure for 'the nations' (Rev. 17: 15; Isa. 8: 7; Ps. 65: 7). —**Gathered of every kind.** This predicted result of Christian effort is sufficiently evident at all times.

Ver. 48. **When it was filled.** A caution against too hasty attempts at separating before the Church has finished her work. If fishermen stop to sort while drawing in their net, they catch little, good or bad.—**They drew up on the beach, i. e., the limit of the sea,**

and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels,
 49 but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in ¹the
 end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and
 50 sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall
 cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the
 weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 Have ye understood all these things? They say
 52 unto him, Yea. And he said unto them, Therefore
 every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the
 kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a house-

¹ Or, *the consummation of the age.*

the end of nations and of time. The next verse shows that the work of discriminating is not committed to men, however successful or zealous in the work of gathering of every kind.—**The good—the bad**, i. e., fishes, though other animals usually get into the net. There are but two classes, one the children of God, and the other those whose destiny is described in vers. 49, 50.

Ver. 49. **Sever the wicked from among the righteous.** Comp. ver. 41. The phrase, 'sitting down,' in ver. 48, and other minor points in the two parables, suggest that this may occupy a period of some length. In the parable of the tares, however, the final separating process accounts for the command: 'Let both grow together till the harvest;' here it is the main point. That parable emphasized the existence with evil side by side with good; this, the separation and destruction of the evil.

Ver. 50. Repeats word for word the awful language of ver. 42, giving great solemnity to the close of the discourse in parables.—The *historical* application is obviously to the closing period and scene of the Church militant.

Conclusion.

Ver. 51. **Have ye understood?** A test of their progress in the art of interpretation. They answered rightly, with childlike *naïveté*, but the next verse suggests that they did not yet fully understand.

Ver. 52. **Every scribe.** Official expounder of the Scriptures, applicable now to the Christian ministry.—**Hath been made a disciple**, of Jesus, the Teacher as well as King.—**To the kingdom of heaven.** Not simply for his own benefit, but for the advantage of this kingdom.—**Householder**, whose duty it is to provide for those of the household.—**Bringeth forth out of his treasure.** The 'treasure' is a constantly increasing knowledge of God's word, in the Bible, in nature, in experience. This he must use to instruct others; he must not selfishly conceal it, nor so set it forth that few

holder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

CHAPTER 13: 53-58.

Christ rejected at Nazareth.

53 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these
54 parables, he departed thence. And coming into his own country he taught them in their synagogue, inso-
much that they were astonished, and said, Whence

can understand it.—**Things new and old.** Explanations: (1) the law and the gospel; (2) things hitherto unknown and those already known; (3) the old truths in new lights, new truths brought into proper accord with the old ones. This is preferable. He who forgets the old, will get hold of novelties, but bring few new things out of his treasure; he who forgets the new, will find that his old methods have become antiquated even to himself, and others will discover it even sooner. Christ's methods of instruction give point to these words, for the old familiar occupations are here used to illustrate the truths of the new kingdom, and yet the thoughts and even words of the Old Testament appear again and again throughout.

Christ rejected at Nazareth, vers. 53-58.

CHRONOLOGY, and relation to the account in Luke 4: 14-30. Views: (1.) Two distinct visits. That in Luke at the beginning of the Galilean ministry, and occasioning the removal to Capernaum (Matt. 4: 17). This one much later, after the discourse in parables (chap. 13), the visit to Gadara and the subsequent miracles (chaps. 8: 18-9: 34). (2.) Different accounts of the same visit, which took place at the earlier period; (3) which took place at the later period. We prefer (1), for the following reasons: He would probably visit His early home a second time; a second rejection would be the result of a second visit. It seems unlikely that the visit, if there was but one, took place at the later period; yet Mark (6: 1-6), who is chronologically most exact, agrees with Matthew in placing it about this time. Matthew and Mark would scarcely omit to mention the attempt at violence detailed by Luke, while the unbelief of the Nazarenes would express itself in much the same way, and the answer of our Lord convey the same thought. The points of agreement and of difference are thus most satisfactorily accounted for.

Ver. 53. **He departed thence.** The departure was to Gadara (comp. chap. 8: 18; Mark 6: 35 sqq.); a number of events intervening between this and the second visit to Nazareth.

Ver. 54. **Into his own country.** Nazareth as the home of His parents and the place 'where he had been brought up' (Luke 4: 16). —**Whence bath this man.** As if to say: This is our townsman, what better schooling did he have than we? what his family is, we all know, etc.

hath this man this wisdom, and these ¹mighty works?
 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother
 called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph,
 56 and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not
 all with us? Whence then hath this man all these
 57 things? And they were ²offended in him. But
 Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor,
 save in his own country, and in his own house.
 58 And he did not many ¹mighty works there because of
 their unbelief.

¹ Gr. *powers*.

² Gr. *caused to stumble*.

Ver. 55. **The carpenter's son.** The word rendered 'carpenter' is sometimes applied to artisans in general; but it means strictly a worker in wood. The question, though not contemptuous, implies: He is one of us, no better than we are, etc. They knew his family, and mention the name of His mother and brothers, speaking also of His sisters, who possibly still resided in Nazareth. On the brothers of our Lord, see the close of the section.—According to Mark 6: 3, they called Jesus Himself 'the carpenter.' He probably had worked with His father at the trade. The shop is still shown in Nazareth; but this, like all other sacred localities there (except the 'Fountain of the Virgin'), are spurious. Every Jewish Rabbi learned a trade as a means of support. Paul was a tent-maker.

Ver. 57. **And they were offended in him,** made to stumble. They were led into error and sin with regard to Him.—**A prophet is not without honor,** etc. The rejection is accounted for by a proverbial expression, verified by human experience. 'Familiarity breeds contempt,' 'Distance lends enchantment to the view,' are still more general expressions of the same principle.

Ver. 58. **And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.** This unbelief was inconsistent and criminal, for they acknowledged His wisdom and power (ver. 54). Jesus does not force His love or blessings on us, and His miracles were not mere displays of Almighty Power. Where there was no faith, no moral condition to justify such displays, there our Lord 'could do no mighty works' (Mark 6: 5). Want of faith is always the great hindrance.

THE BROTHERS OF OUR LORD. Mention is made fourteen or fifteen times in the New Testament of the brothers of our Lord, named in ver. 55. Here and in Mark 'sisters' are also mentioned. There must have been at least three, for 'all' being feminine in Greek, must refer to the sisters. In an ordinary history, this could only mean that they were the younger children of Joseph and Mary, or possibly elder children of Joseph by a former marriage. The well-known terms

'cousin' and 'kinsman,' would have been used had the relationship been a different one. Notwithstanding this, *three* views have been held:

(1.) That they were the children of Joseph and Mary; the theory of Tertullian, Helvidius, and many of the best modern Protestant commentators (including Alford and Farrar).

(2.) That they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage; the theory of Epiphanius, and the ancient Greek Church, recently advocated by Bishop Lightfoot.

(3.) That they were the children of Mary, the wife of Alphæus (Clopas), the sister of our Lord's mother, and hence his cousins. This was the theory of Jerome, adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, and by the older (and some modern) Protestant commentators. Lange modifies this view by supposing that Alphæus was the brother of Joseph, and that in consequence of his early death the children were adopted by Joseph.

1. The first view is the most natural one. Objections: (a) It denies the perpetual virginity of Mary, which is a dogma in the Catholic Church, and was the first step towards Mariolatry. But this is nowhere asserted in the New Testament; while Matt. 1: 25 and Luke 2: 7 suggest the contrary. (b) Gal. 1: 19 seems to intimate that James, our Lord's brother, was an Apostle, while this view involves the non-identity of this James with James the son of Alphæus, who undoubtedly was an Apostle. But the passage in Galatians has, from the earliest times, been interpreted as not implying the Apostleship of our 'Lord's brother,' who was so called to distinguish him from the two Apostles of that name. (See note on that passage.) Further, at a point in the history *after* the choice of the Twelve (John 7: 5). His brethren did not believe on Him; they are distinguished from the 'Apostles' in Acts 1: 14; 1 Cor. 9: 5, and by implication in Matt. 12: 46-50. They were converted, it seems, after the resurrection (Acts 1: 13; 1 Cor. 15: 7). (c) Our Lord on the cross commended His mother to the care of John, which is regarded as strange, if she had other sons. This is the only serious difficulty, which holds also against the second theory. But the spiritual nearness of John, and the probable kinship (see below, and notes on John 19: 25), will account for this.

2. The view that they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage is not open to any great objection, though sustained by no positive evidence. It is supported by some apocryphal gospels, by the Greek tradition, by the apparent old age of Joseph, and by the patronizing tone in which the brethren speak to Jesus, John 7: 3, 4. But it may have arisen from a desire to save the perpetual virginity of Mary. It was the first step towards the Roman Catholic view.

3. The cousin-theory was invented by Jerome in the fifth century, to save both the virginity of Mary and of Joseph, and is beset with insuperable difficulties. (a) It assumes that two sisters had the same name (Mary). (b) It does not account for 'Simon' and 'Judas,' who

CHAPTER 14: 1-13.

The Impression produced on Herod by Reports of our Lord's Works.

14: 1 AT that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report

were our Lord's brothers. Indeed, the better supported reading ('Joseph,' ver. 55) destroys the identity of name with Mark 15: 40 ('Jones'). (c) It is probable that 'Salome,' and not 'Mary' (John 19: 25), was the sister of our Lord's mother. (d) The theory assumes that two of these brethren (James and Judas) could be Apostles and yet unbelievers (John 7: 5), and even disrespectful towards our Lord (John 7: 8-5; comp. Mark 3: 21-31), which is quite inconceivable. (e) It assumes that the four Evangelists and Paul should speak of brothers and sisters of Christ (in the sense of natural relationship) without the least intimation that it meant only cousinhood, and not brotherhood, when they could have so easily avoided the mistake by using the proper term. There is no other example of such a wide meaning of 'brother' in the New Testament, and the examples adduced from the Old Testament are not strictly parallel. The view of Lange is free from some of these difficulties, but assumes what is extremely improbable, namely, that at least half a dozen children were adopted into the family of a poor carpenter. Besides, it is a pure hypothesis.

The view that Mary had other children furnishes an argument in favor of the historical character of the Gospels. Had the story of the miraculous conception been a fiction, the Evangelists, to give consistency to the tale, would have denied that our Lord had any brothers, instead of speaking of them without reserve. The fact that our Saviour lived in a large family, several members of which did not believe in Him till after the resurrection, brings Him nearer to the common lot and trials of man and deepens our view of His amazing condescension and humiliation.

The Impression produced on Herod by Reports of our Lord's Works, vers. 1-13.

CHRONOLOGY. The chapter opens with an indefinite mark of time ('at that season,' ver. 1); but Luke 9: 10 shows that it was upon the return of the Twelve. Hence chap. 9: 35-38, and chap. 10, find their place between chaps. 13 and 14. The order of this chapter is chronological. The feeding of the five thousand, narrated by all four Evangelists, forms a definite point of comparison.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 6: 14-29; Luke 9: 7-9. Mark's account is the most graphic, and probably derived from the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, who was one of the female disciples and supporters of Jesus (Luke 8: 3). The section gives a fearful picture of the Herodian family, in their lust, ambition, and cruelty. No scene in history presents in a single group more of the vices characteristic of corrupt courts: arbitrary imprisonment, dread of the multitude, adultery and incest, illegal divorce, feasting and intoxication, voluptuous and immodest dancing, lavish promises and foolish oaths to the dancer, weak fear of court flatterers, and the murder of a faithful reprobator;

2 concerning Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and 3 therefore do these powers work in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's

the picture completed by the superstition of the murderer, who sees in the power of the Messiah only a token that his victim has reappeared. The impression produced on the mind of Herod leads to the withdrawal mentioned in ver. 13.

Ver. 1. **At that season.** Quite indefinite (see above).—**Herod the tetrarch.** Herod Antipas (a son of Herod the Great) now ruler in Galilee and Peræa; a light-minded, prodigal and luxurious prince, superstitious and cunning (Mark 8: 15; Luke 13: 32). He was at Jerusalem when our Lord suffered, and showed utter heartlessness on that occasion. He died in Spain, a defeated and banished man (see on ver. 3). 'Tetrarch;' strictly speaking, the ruler of a fourth part of a country; here the fourth part of the Roman province of Syria. He resided at Tiberias.—**Heard the report concerning Jesus.** Probably at Machærus (where John had been imprisoned), which was remote from the scene of our Lord's ministry. He first heard of Him now, through the more extended labors of the Twelve.

Ver. 2. **This is John the Baptist.** Comp. Luke 9: 7-9. This does not imply a belief in the transmigration of souls, nor prove that Herod was a Sadducee (although some infer this from Mark 8: 15); it is the perplexed and terrified utterance of a guilty conscience.—**Therefore,** etc. John had wrought no miracle (chap. 10: 41), but Herod supposed that the raising from the dead had resulted in higher powers.—**Powers,** or 'mighty works,' as in chap. 13: 54, 58. Herod's desire to see our Lord was at best a patronizing condescension to the gospel.

Ver. 3. **For Herod had laid hold on John,** etc. This imprisonment took place not long after our Lord began His ministry (comp. chap. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14; John 3: 24). The fortress Machærus in Peræa was the scene of the imprisonment and death of John (according to Josephus who makes honorable mention of John, *Ant.* 18: 5).—**For the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.** Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus (the half-brother of Herod Antipas), the wife of Herod Philip (not to be confounded with Philip the Tetrarch, Luke 8: 1), who was disinherited by his father, Herod the Great, and lived as a private citizen. Herod Antipas was first married to a daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia (mentioned 2 Cor. 11: 32). Becoming enamored of Herodias, his niece and sister-in-law, he married her secretly, while her husband was still living, repudiating his own legal wife. Aretas made war against him in consequence, and having defeated him was prevented by the Romans from dethroning him (A. D. 37). At the instigation of Herodias he went to Rome to

4 wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for
 5 thee to have her. And when he would have put him
 to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted
 6 him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came,
 the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and
 7 pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath
 8 to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she,
 being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here

compete for the kingly power bestowed on Agrippa, but was banished by the Emperor Caligula to Gaul, where he died.

Ver. 4. **For John said**; not once but habitually, as the original hints. John was a bold preacher of righteousness and repentance, not 'a reed shaken by the wind' (chap. 11: 7). His fidelity led to his imprisonment.—**It is not lawful.** The act of Herod was a crime of adultery against his brother, against his wife, and according to the Mosaic law doubly incestuous, since Herodias was his niece and his sister-in-law (comp. Lev. 18: 16; 20: 21). The Baptist, in the very spirit of Elijah, rebuked this scandal, and thus brought upon himself the wrath of the guilty queen.

Ver. 5. **And when he would have put him to death.** At the instigation of Herodias (Mark 6: 19, 20).—**He feared the multitude,** etc. The character of John also restrained him; but the political motive was needed to overbear the influence of Herodias.

Ver. 6. **Herod's birth-day.** Probably the anniversary of his accession to power. The nobility of Galilee were at the feast (Mark 6: 21). The dancing seems to have taken place late in the entertainment, when all were more or less intoxicated.—**The daughter of Herodias.** 'Salome,' the daughter of Herod Philip. Josephus gives her name. She married her uncle Philip the Tetrarch, and after his death her cousin Aristobulus. Comp. Mark 6: 22.—**Danced in the midst.** She had been sent by her mother to gain an opportunity for killing John (Mark 6: 21). The dance was a pantomime probably of a voluptuous character, and was performed 'in the midst,' with the intoxicated party on their couches forming a circle about her. Such conduct was deemed immodest by Jews, Greeks, and Romans, though common at Eastern and Roman banquets; in this case there was added a criminal purpose, and a sin against her own forsaken father. Public dancing (and often private dancing) is apt to call forth evil passions, even if not designed to do so.

Ver. 7. The promise and oath of Herod show his gratification, which Herodias had anticipated. Mark adds: 'unto the half of my kingdom.'

Ver. 8. **Being put forward** (or, 'set on,' 'instigated') **by her mother.** She went out and consulted her mother, but the mother's purpose had already been formed, and her answer (Mark 6: 24) shows

9 in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat at meat with him, he commanded it 10 to be given; and he sent, and beheaded John in the 11 prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. 12 And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

great vindictiveness and determination, as does the demand, not for the death, but for the head of the Baptist.—**Upon a charger** (better, 'platter'). A large dish. This seems to have been added by Salome herself, 'as a hideous jest, implying an intention to devour it' (J. A. Alexander).

Ver. 9. **And the king was grieved.** 'Grieved' rather than 'sorry.' Disturbed rather than penitent. It was the last feeble struggle of conscience. The emotion was in keeping with his character and feelings toward John, but was of no avail: compliance with the murderous request was the more criminal because he was 'grieved.' Herod is called 'the king' by Mark also, although he did not really possess the title.—**But for the sake of his oaths.** The oath was foolish, and was sinfully kept. Better break our word than God's Word. Herod was scrupulous on this point, and yet an adulterer and murderer.—**And them that sat at meat with him.** His courtiers were probably hostile to John. In any case the fear of men, so powerful for evil, influenced him.

Ver. 10. **And he sent,** etc. If the feast took place in Machærus, the head was brought in before the feast closed. Some however infer from Mark's account that the messengers went some distance, and hence that the feast was given in a royal palace at Livias (not far from Machærus), while others think the nobility of Galilee would more probably be invited to Tiberias, the usual residence of Herod. But the words 'give me here' (ver. 8), indicate that the prison was not far off. The martyrdom of John is his strongest sermon, heard and felt everywhere. He still precedes Christ in every revival, as repentance must precede forgiveness.

Ver. 11. **She brought it to her mother.** 'A Jezebel was not wanting in the history of the second Elijah.' The vindictive adulteress was served by the immodest dancer; the sixth and seventh commandment stand next each other.

Ver. 12. **Took up the corpse, and buried him,** is a literal rendering—**And they went,**—probably John's disciples.—**And told Jesus.** They would naturally go to Him, if properly affected by the interview recorded in chap. 11. Others kept aloof and formed a new sect.

CHAPTER 14: 13-21.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

- 13 Now when Jesus heard it, he withdrew from thence in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him ¹on foot from

¹ Or, *by land*.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand, vers. 18-21.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 6: 33-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 5-15. The feeding of the Five Thousand is the only miracle mentioned by all four Evangelists, and the first occurrence fully narrated by them all. It also furnishes a definite chronological point for a harmony of the Gospels. It is in many respects the most incomprehensible of all the miracles. It is the strongest manifestation of Christ's sovereignty over nature, almost equal to the creative art that called nothing into being. And yet it is *spiritually* perpetuated constantly in Christ's feeding His people with the bread of life through faith without ever being exhausted or diminished. This idea is developed in the discourse which follows in John's narrative.

Various suggestions have been made as to the mode of increase, as involving a higher order of nature; an acceleration of the natural process; a removal of the ban of barrenness resting on our earthly bread, showing the positive fullness which it contains when Christ's blessing descends upon it. It is safest to accept a supernatural increase without seeking to know the method, and then to seek and accept the spiritual lessons it teaches. The attempts to explain it as a natural event have been utter failures. The four Evangelists could not write as they have done, of a 'myth,' a 'parable,' or a 'symbol.' Either this was a miracle, or the Evangelists have wilfully falsified.

The great lesson is: Christ the Bread of the world; its type is the manna in the wilderness. Christ's people partake of Him to the nourishment of their souls. As in the miracle, the means may be visible, but the mode unknown; of the fact we may be assured, and may assure others.—Notice the contrast between the feast of the 'estates of Galilee' at Herod's court, and this feast of the poor and sick multitudes in the wilderness. Our Lord gave freely in the wilderness: healed, taught, and fed all.—'The Bible, so little in bulk, like the five barley loaves and the two fishes, what thousands upon thousands has it fed, and will it feed, in every age, in every land of Christendom, to the world's end!'

Ver. 13. Now when Jesus heard it. No doubt with deep emotion. This was not the only cause of the retirement (see Mark 6: 31). The Twelve had returned and the multitudes gave Him and them no rest. Besides this gathering of multitudes would make Herod more suspicious.—**Into a desert place apart.** Not a 'desert' in the modern sense, but a thinly inhabited district: in Gaulonitis near Bethsaida-Julias, on the north-eastern shore of the lake of Tiberias (see Luke 9: 10; John 6: 1), in the dominion of Philip the Tetrarch.

14 the cities. And he came forth, and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, and healed
 15 their sick. And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying, The place is desert, and the time is already past; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food.
 16 But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go
 17 away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him,
 18 We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. And
 19 he said, Bring them hither to me. And he com-

Our Lord would avoid Herod as well as seek rest for His disciples.—**They followed him.** Comp. Mark 6: 33. The popularity of our Lord continued.—**By land.** This is the usual meaning of the Greek phrase, which is literally rendered: 'on foot.'

Ver. 14. **Had compassion on them.** All had followed Him so far, and were in a state of spiritual destitution; many of them were sick. His compassion manifested itself in healing **their sick**, and in giving them instruction (Mark 6: 34). The approach of the Passover season (John 6: 4) accounts for the greatness of the multitude; many of them were probably on their way to Jerusalem.

Ver. 15. **Even.** The *first evening*, i. e., from three to six P. M. (ninth to twelfth hour of the day); ver. 23 refers to the *second evening*, which began at six P. M. (the first watch of the night).—**The time, lit., 'hour,' is already past.** Either the time of day is late, or the time for the evening meal is past. The disciples probably interrupted His discourse with this suggestion. Our Lord had continued His work of teaching and healing, until He had an opportunity to show how He could supply other wants. Those who wait on Him shall be fed! John tells us He 'knew what He would do,' inserting a question our Lord put to Philip (who was probably the spokesman) to try him. (See John 6: 5-7.)

Ver. 16. **Give ye them to eat.** Obedience seemed impossible, but they did obey through Christ's power providing the means for them. Duty is measured by Christ's command, not by our resources.

Ver. 17. **We have here.** Andrew said this: a lad who was present had this small store of food (John 6: 8, 9). The disciples, though full of perplexity and doubt, tried to *obey*, and sought food for the multitude. The loaves and fishes thus obtained, of which they said: 'What are they among so many?' were given by them to the people.—**Five loaves** ('barley loaves') **and two fishes** ('small fishes'). Plain, common food.

Ver. 18. **Bring them hither to me.** The store, so scanty, is first given to Christ; thus it becomes valuable and sufficient.

Ver. 19. **To recline on the grass.** 'Now there was much grass

manded the multitudes to ¹ sit down on the grass; and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And they that did eat

¹ Gr. *recline*.

on the place,' John 6: 10. At that season it would be luxuriant, and form an easy and convenient resting-place. They reclined in groups of hundreds and fifties (Mark 6: 40; Luke 9: 14); thus confusion was avoided and the distribution made easy. Such an arrangement precluded deception. There was no disorderly running after 'the loaves and fishes;' Christ's blessings were received through those He commanded to impart them.—**Looking up to heaven, he blessed; and breaking the loaves, he gave them.** The description recalls the Last Supper, of which this miracle is a premonition. See John 6: 52–59. The word 'bless' in the Bible means God's favoring us, our asking favors of Him and our thanksgiving for such favors; the three senses are always more or less connected. The form of the Greek disconnects the 'loaves' from the word 'bless.' The blessing was therefore mainly a thanksgiving (comp. John: 'when he had given thanks'), not simply a blessing of the loaves. Thus the eucharistic reference becomes prominent.—**The loaves to his disciples.** The miraculous increase probably took place in the act of distribution to the disciples. The accounts of the three other Evangelists indicate a continuous giving on the part of our Lord. But the miracle eludes explanation and description.

Ver. 20. **And were filled.** Philip had said that two hundred shillings-worth of bread would only give each a little; but now all had received enough.—**Of the broken pieces.** The pieces they distributed, **pieces**, not the refuse.—**Twelve baskets full.** 'Baskets' such as travellers carried with them. They may have belonged to the disciples, who collected the broken pieces. What was gathered exceeded what was first given out. Hence the miracle was an increase of quantity, and not merely of the nourishing quality of the bread. Christ was no waster; He enjoined (John 6: 12) carefulness and economy at the close of His most abundant bestowment. These fragments were probably for the use of the Twelve, since such miraculous increase was not the rule, but the exception. This circumstance mentioned by all four Evangelists was designed to impress the miracle upon the disciples (comp. chap. 16: 9).

Ver. 21. **Five thousand men.** All the Evangelists mention the number of men. Matthew alone adds: **beside women and children.** The latter classes were probably not numerous, and would be

were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

CHAPTER 14: 22-36.

Jesus walking on the Sea and Healing in the Land of Gennesaret.

- 22 And straightway he constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side, till he should send the multitudes away.
23 And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray: and when even

fed apart from the men. On the effect of the miracle, see John 6: 14, 15.

Jesus Walking on the Sea and Healing in the Land of Gennesaret, vers. 22-36.

CONNECTION. Comp. Mark 6: 45-52; John 6: 15-21. Immediately after the miraculous feeding, the people wished to proclaim Jesus a king, and were ready to take violent steps for that purpose (John 6: 14, 15). The disciples were probably ready to join the people in an enterprise which would fulfil their remaining carnal expectations regarding the Messiahship of their Master. Hence our Lord dismissed them, sending them where they would feel their need of His presence. Mark and John narrate this occurrence; but the attempt of Peter (vers. 29-31) is mentioned only by Matthew.

Ver. 22. **Constrained the disciples.** See above.—**To go before him unto the other side.** Mark: 'to Bethsaida;' John: 'toward Capernaum,' this being the ultimate point to be reached. (See note on chap. 11: 21.) We infer that he sent them to *eastern* Bethsaida, which was not far off (Luke 9: 10), directing them to await Him there, so that they would cross together to Capernaum on the opposite shore, which they actually did, after the miracle. This accords best with all the details as given by the three Evangelists.—**Till he should send the multitudes away.** They were in an excited condition; hence great prudence, perhaps an exercise of some constraining power was necessary.

Ver. 23. **He went up into the mountain apart to pray.** The attempt to make Him a king was a temptation to be met by prayer.—**Even** (evening). Here the second evening. Comp. ver. 15.—**He was there alone.** Alone with His Father. Prayer succeeded and preceded His labors for men.

24 was come, he was there alone. But the boat ¹was now in the midst of the sea, distressed by the waves; 25 for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is an apparition; and 27 they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not 28 afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *was many furlongs distant from the land*.

Ver. 24. **But the boat was now in the midst of the sea.** When Jesus came to them, they were 'about twenty-five or thirty furlongs' from shore (John 6: 19), *i. e.*, about the middle of the lake.—**Distressed**, or 'vexed,' **by the waves.** The storm had arisen after they started (John 6: 18).—**For the wind was contrary.** It is most probable that they put out into the lake, and steering for (eastern) Bethsaida, were driven out into the middle of the lake by an easterly wind. Their 'toiling in rowing' (Mark 6: 48) seems far more natural, if they were trying to meet the Lord at the appointed place. Had they been steering for the western shore (as some suppose), they might have turned back and gone to Him with a contrary (west) wind.

Ver. 25. **In the fourth watch of the night.** Between three and six o'clock in the morning. Their danger had lasted nearly all night. Deliverance is often delayed, but while the Master prayed, the disciples could not be lost.—**He came unto them.** Mark adds: 'and would have passed by them,' *i. e.*, to try them.—**Walking upon the sea.** The main point here is His coming over the sea to join His disciples. The narrative implies an exercise of supernatural power. An anticipation of Christ's spiritual body which manifested itself also in the Transfiguration, and became normal after resurrection.

Ver. 26. **It is an apparition, or a 'spectre.'** An unreal appearance of a real person. The word is not that usually rendered 'spirit.'—**They cried out for fear.** Matthew is an honest witness to tell of this superstitious fear. As he here discriminates between 'an apparition' and a real bodily appearance of our Lord, he cannot mean the former when he writes of the resurrection of Christ.

Ver. 27. **It is I.** An assurance, through a living voice, of His bodily presence.—**Be not afraid.** The presence of Christ always brings with it this cheering injunction.

Ver. 28. **And Peter answered.** The silence of the other Evangelists is remarkable, but casts no doubt upon the truthfulness of Mat-

29 And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters,¹ to come to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind,² he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, 32 wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were

¹ Some ancient authorities read *and came*.

² Many ancient authorities add *strong*.

themselves' account. The occurrence is strikingly in accordance with Peter's impulsive character, 'almost a rehearsal' of the subsequent denial.—**If it be thou.** Not the language of doubt. Peter's fault lay in the words: **bid me**, etc., which betray a desire to outdare the other disciples; comp. the boast: 'Though all should be offended,' etc. (chap. 26: 33).

Ver. 29. **And he said, Come.** More of a permission than a command, as the result proved.—**He walked upon the waters.** Not necessarily very far; and yet so long as he thus walked, it was through supernatural aid from Christ. The power was obtained and conditioned by *faith* in Christ's power. So in our spiritual walk above the waves of this world.

Ver. 30. **But when he saw the wind.** 'Boisterous,' or 'strong,' is omitted by the best authorities. He was going against the wind. This favors the theory of their course, advanced in the notes on ver. 24. The other view would imply that Jesus had walked past them and turned towards them.—So long as Peter looked to Jesus only, he had by faith the power of Jesus to rise above the waters, but when he looked at the waves, beginning to doubt, he began to sink. Peter could swim (John 21: 7); yet in his terror he seems to have lost even his natural attainments. To be near Christ in person avails nothing, unless we are near Him by faith. Peter sinks without Christ; clinging to his successors instead of Christ, must be in vain.—**Lord, save me.** Comp. Ps. 107: 27, 28. His faith, too weak to enable him to *walk* to Christ, was strong enough to *call* to Christ.

Ver. 31. **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?** Chrysostom: we need not fear the tempest, but only the weakness of our faith. Hence Christ does not calm the storm, but takes Peter by the hand. Trench: 'Peter is here the image of all the faithful of all ages, in the seasons of their weakness and their fear.'

Ver. 32. **And when they were gone up into the boat.** John (6: 21) speaks of the boat being immediately 'at the land whither they went.' This was on the western side of the lake, and we may either suppose that the wind during the night had driven them near that shore, or accept another miracle.

33 gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And when they had crossed over, they came to the
35 land, unto Gennesaret. And when the men of that place knew him, they sent into all that region round
36 about, and brought unto him all that were sick; and they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole.

Ver. 33. **They that were in the boat.** Probably mariners and others exclusive of the disciples. The effect produced upon the latter is declared in strong terms, Mark 6: 51, 52.—**The Son of God**, lit., son of God. Probably only a recognition of His Messiahship; but the miracle would exalt their notions respecting the Messiah. For the first time *men* owned our Lord as the Son of God. John the Baptist had done so by Divine commission (John 1: 34; 3: 35, 36).

Ver. 34. **And when they had crossed over.** This points to ordinary, not miraculous sailing.—**To the land, unto Gennesaret.** 'Gennesaret' was a fertile district, with a mild climate, on the western shore of the lake (also called the Lake of Gennesaret). It was about four miles long and half as broad, extending from Khan Minyeh on the north to Medjel on the south. The modern name is El-Ghuweir.

Ver. 35. **The men of that place.** Not Capernaum, but a more retired spot. The people who had been fed, came to that city 'seeking Jesus' (John 6: 24); it is implied that they found Him somewhere else. Mark's account suggests that our Lord passed through other places on his way to Capernaum.—**Knew him.** When morning came, they would recognize Him, as our Lord was personally well known in Galilee.

Ver. 36. **Only touch the border of his garment.** A woman had been thus healed in the presence of a crowd (chap. 9: 20-22), so that these people were not superstitious, but had strong faith. As our Lord was only passing through, a greater number could be healed in this way. Christ's miracles were always performed so as to show a connection between Himself and the person cured, even though it were so slight a one as this touch.—This is the fourth general description of our Lord's ministry; in each case (4: 24; 9: 35; 11: 1, and here) after a series of events grouped together without reference to accurate chronological order.

CHAPTER 15 : 1-20.

The Discourse, in Public and to the Disciples, about Eating with Unwashed Hands.

15 : 1 THEN there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders? for they wash not

The Discourse, in Public and to the Disciples, about Eating with Unwashed Hands, vers. 1-20.

CONTENTS. Comp. Mark 7 : 1-23. Only Matthew and Mark narrate the events recorded in this chapter. The discourse at Capernaum (John 6 : 22-71), respecting the manna from heaven, followed the feeding of the five thousand. The Passover, which was nigh at hand (John 6 : 4), was not attended by our Lord (John 7 : 1). This chapter begins the story of the last year of our Lord's ministry, which covers half the Gospel (chaps. 14-28). The history of 'the year of conflict' begins with an account of a covert attack on our Lord. The Pharisees from Jerusalem (Mark 3 : 22) began their open opposition some time before. They accused the Lord of blasphemy in forgiving sins (9 : 3), of disregarding fasts (9 : 14), of Sabbath-breaking (12 : 2, 10), and of casting out demons by Beelzebub (12 : 24 sqq.). Now they remonstrate against the conduct of His disciples. The interview with the Pharisees (vers. 1-9) shows that it is characteristic of sticklers for the external customs and ceremonies of religion (Pharisees in all ages) to be intolerant about little and belittling questions, to be inconsistent, unrighteous (even according to their own standard), and hypocritical. This ever-recurring mistake of making religion consist in 'meat and drink,' is further rebuked in the saying to the multitude (vers. 10, 11), while the offence taken by the Pharisees (ver. 12) forms the basis of a declaration that Pharisaism is not of God's planting, and is to be destroyed, defeating itself (vers. 13, 14). The exposition of the 'parable' shows the nature of real defilement. Moral purity or impurity is from the heart, not from the food, still less from the observance or neglect of the ceremonial 'washing' of the hands before eating bread. On this point the Lord's words (ver. 16) are still applicable: 'Even yet are ye also without understanding.'

Ver. 1. **From Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes.** Not 'scribes and Pharisees,' but representatives of the party of the Pharisees, including 'scribes.' Possibly a formal deputation from the Sanhedrin ('from Jerusalem'). They came apparently with a definite and hostile purpose (comp. Mark 7 : 1), probably to aid the Galilean Pharisees, or, as is less likely, in consequence of the conduct of the disciples of our Lord at the recent Passover feast in Jerusalem. (See ver. 2.)

Ver. 2. **Why do thy disciples transgress?** They had seen them thus 'transgress,' either at Jerusalem, or, as is more probable, in Galilee (comp. Mark 7 : 2). In reality a cautious and artful attack upon Christ Himself.—**The tradition of the elders.** Certain rules

- 3 their hands when they eat bread. And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?
 4 For God said, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let
 5 him ¹die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say

¹ Or, *surely die*.

handed down by word of mouth from Moses and the fathers of the nation (comp. Gal. 1: 14). 'Elders' refers to the authors, not the upholders, of these traditional customs. 'The Jews attached greater value to tradition than even to the written law, appealing in support of it to Deut. 4: 14; 17: 10. More especially did they pay respect to the traditionary injunction of washing the hands before meals, to which it was thought Lev. 15: 11 referred' (Meyer).—**For they wash not their hands when they eat bread.** Comp. the explanation in Mark 7: 3, 4. Writing for the Gentiles, Mark explains the custom. The washing referred to was not an act of cleanliness, but a ceremonial washing, performed with scrupulous care. The Jews ate with their fingers; they shrank not from dirt, but from ceremonial pollution. 'Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst to eating without washing his hands' (Alford). The Pharisees assumed the authority of this tradition. Our Lord opposes, not the custom, but the principle they assumed. Notice the belittling influence of legalism. Rabbi Eleazar Ben Hazar was excommunicated because he undervalued the washing of hands, and when he was dead, a great stone was laid upon his bier by order of the Sanhedrin (Lightfoot).

Ver. 3. **Why do ye also transgress?** The neglect is acknowledged, but the tradition attacked.—**Because of your tradition, i. e.,** you break God's law, in order that you may keep your (human) tradition. Comp. Mark 7: 9. The direct command of God was set aside for tradition by those who claimed to be the strictest observers of the written law of God. Christ never appeals to tradition, but always to the written Word of God.

Ver. 4. **For God said** (comp. Mark 7: 10), in the law of Moses. Our Lord assumes that God spoke through this law. The precepts cited are apt, since the Pharisees upheld tradition as delivered by the 'fathers.'—**He that speaketh evil of, etc.** Exod. 21: 17. Our Lord quotes, not the promise in the Decalogue, but the penalty given elsewhere.—**Die the death.** In the original Hebrew: 'dying he shall die;' in the original Greek of this passage: 'let him end with death,' both equivalent to: 'he shall surely die;' this penalty is to be inflicted upon him.

Ver. 5. **But ye say.** God said one thing, 'ye say' another; and though you quote tradition, it has only your own authority.—**Is given**

to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; 6 he shall not honour his ¹father. And ye have made void the ²word of God because of your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,
 8 This people honoureth me with their lips;

¹ Some ancient authorities add *or his mother*.

² Some ancient authorities read *law*.

to God. 'That from which thou mightest have been benefited by me, is an offering to God.' The Rabbins taught that by calling his possessions 'corban' (the Hebrew word for 'gift to God,' Mark 7: 11), a man was absolved from the duty of caring for his parents, yet the brief expression was not considered sufficient to bind the party to devote his property to religious uses.

Ver. 6. **He shall not honor his father.** The best authorities omit 'and.' 'Ye say: whosoever shall say, etc., he shall not honor his father.' The Pharisees directly deny the validity of the fifth commandment. There are two other views, both of them requiring the insertion of 'and.' One, that of the common version: 'Whosoever shall say, etc., and (in consequence) honor not, *he shall be free.*' The other makes the last clause the judgment of our Lord: 'Ye say, whosoever shall say, etc., *he is not bound*, etc., and (I say that in consequence) he shall not honor his father.' The parallel passage in Mark favors the last view; both views avoid the difficulty of putting so direct a denial in the mouth of the Pharisees; but the true reading and grammatical usage compel the adoption of the first view.—The words 'or his mother' are also to be omitted.—**And ye have made void.** Not merely transgressed, but rejected, **the word of God.** Some ancient authorities read 'law,' others 'commandment;' but 'word' is better sustained, and is more forcible. What God *says* is of itself a command, never to be rejected.—**Because of your tradition** (see ver. 3). Modern Pharisaism does the same. Church tradition leads to dogmas which deny God's direct commands. Its upholders persecute not only for infractions of their interpretations of God's laws, but for disregard of precepts of their own making. Or at least, they break Christ's law of love, through zeal for external things about which Christ gave no express command.

Ver. 7. **Ye hypocrites.** This word had not quite so strong a sense then as now. It includes those self-deceived.—**Well did Isaiah prophesy of you.** Isa. 29: 13. 'Well,' i. e., aptly. Our Lord assumes that the prophecy properly referred to the Jewish people then, while He does not imply that this was its exclusive or even original application.

Ver. 8. **This people, etc.** The briefer form is now the established reading. Early copyists inserted the full form.—**Their heart is far**

But their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching as *their* doctrines the precepts of men.

10 And he called to him the multitude, and said unto
11 them, Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which
7 proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man.

from me. In the Hebrew: 'Their heart they have removed far from me.' Applicable first to the contemporaries of Isaiah, but descriptive of the unbelieving Jews in all ages, and, as our Lord declares, peculiarly 'apt' at that time.

Ver. 9. **In vain.** This phrase (once implied in the original passage in Isaiah) refers to the *emptiness* of such worship. It is both *groundless* (without true principle) and *fruitless* (without proper results). The Hebrew means literally: 'their fearing of me has become a precept of men, a thing taught.' A rebuke of religion, resting only on human authority, but as applied to the Pharisees in this case, showing that such religion becomes *positively false*, contrary to God's commandments.—Alford: 'The portion of Isaiah from which this citation is made (chaps. 24-35) sets forth, in alternate threatenings and promises, the punishment of the mere nominal Israel, and the salvation of the true Israel of God. And, as so often in the prophetic word, its threats and promises are for all times of the Church;—the particular event then foretold being but one fulfilment of those deeper and more general declarations of God, which shall be ever having their successive illustrations in His dealings with men.'

Ver. 10. **Then he called to him the multitude.** Without answering the question about 'washing of hands,' He turns to the people, as if to say, these hypocrites, though the zealous expounders of the law, cannot understand its real sense.

Ver. 11. **Entereth.** In this verse, and vers. 17-19, a number of verbs of motion are used, the exact force of which we seek to preserve in the corrections of the common version.—**Defileth the man, i. e.,** makes him common, impure or profane. The Mosaic law, by a variety of regulations, kept up the distinction between pure and impure, to teach the importance of *moral* purity. This purpose had been lost sight of, and the external regulation not only made the main matter, but extended and exalted, so that ceremonial impurity was considered worse than moral impurity. Our Lord opposes only this perversion of the Mosaic law. Lange: 'What is here said concerning the going into and coming out of the mouth, applies to the whole series of Levitical and moral injunctions concerning purity. The statement was, in the first place, indeed intended as a justification of His disciples on the charge brought against them by the Pharisees. But the inference was obvious, that all these injunctions required to be fulfilled in a

12 Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were ¹offended, when they 13 heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every ²plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall 14 be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into

¹ Gr. *caused to stumble.*

² Gr. *planting.*

higher sense (although this did not imply that the Lord denied their validity as Levitical ordinances). As a matter of course, when the symbol would be completely fulfilled, its outward representation must fall to the ground.' Pharisees in all ages have exalted the mere sign and symbol above the reality. Some people make their whole religion consist in not allowing certain meats and drinks to enter 'into the mouth.'

Ver. 12. **Then came the disciples.** After He went into the house (Mark 7: 17).—**The Pharisees were offended** ('took offence') **when they heard this saying.** Probably the saying in ver. 11, which seemed to be in opposition to the Levitical law. They were ready to take offence from the effect of the previous discourse (vers. 3-9). The disciples, hearing their disparaging and hostile remarks in the crowd, warn their Master, as their opponents were important personages.

Ver. 13. **Every plant.** This refers to the *teaching and traditions* of the Pharisees, although the persons became identified with their false doctrine.—**Which my heavenly Father planted not.** The Pharisees claimed Divine authority for their teaching; our Lord declares by implication that it was wholly human and as such should **be rooted up**, taken away and destroyed, to make room for a plant of His planting, the purer doctrine of the kingdom. It was a declaration of a purpose to oppose the Pharisees. To us it is a promise, with a terrible side indeed, but bidding us take courage when we see false and corrupt religion flourishing; it 'shall be rooted up.'

Ver. 14. **Let them alone.** His disciples are not to begin an attack upon the Pharisees. Error, if let alone, defeats and destroys itself. Let it work out its self-destructive results!—**They are blind guides.** They profess to be teachers, but have themselves no spiritual sight. If then **the blind guide the blind**, those who follow such are of course blind also.—**Both shall fall into a pit**, which lies in their path; from the nature of the case a pit of destruction. Here the effect on the persons is spoken of. Discussions and controversies are to be instituted by Christians with the sole purpose of saving men, the defeat of false doctrine being left to its own self-destructive tendency.—As Luke (6: 39), in his report of the Sermon on the Mount, gives the same figure in a different connection, we may infer that it became proverbial in our Lord's teachings. The general

15 a pit. And Peter answered and said unto him, De-
 16 clare unto us the parable. And he said, Are ye also
 17 even yet without understanding? Perceive ye not,
 that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the
 18 belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the
 things which proceed out of the mouth come forth
 19 out of the heart; and they defile the man. For
 out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders,
 adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings:

principle is obvious; but it admitted of various applications. Here it is used to enforce a lesson of patience; in Luke it is connected with instruction about harsh judgments.

Ver. 15. **Peter.** He again acts as the spokesman, hence 'unto us.'—**Declare, i. e., 'expound.'**—**The parable.** That of ver. 11 (comp. Mark 7: 17). The declaration in ver. 11 was a 'hard saying' to those who were born Jews, and hence Peter might have called it a 'parable,' especially as our Lord had so often taught the deeper truths in that form. Or the disciples, with their Jewish education, might have thought: this saying, to which the Pharisees so much object, is not to be taken literally; it must be a parable. The censure of the next verse favors this explanation.

Ver. 16. **Even yet.** After all the instruction received.—**Are ye also.** As well as the multitude (ver. 10).—**Without understanding,** literally 'unintelligent.'

Ver. 17. **Perceive ye not?** The truth affirmed was one easy to be perceived by the spiritually minded.—**Into the draught, i. e., 'drain, sink, or privy.'** The thought of the verse (especially when further explained by the words in Mark 7: 19: 'because it entereth not into his heart') is that food affects the body, not the heart, that the moral and spiritual state of man is not dependent on the food or drink he uses, much less on certain ceremonial observances in regard to these things. This verse indirectly opposes modern materialism.

Ver. 18. Expresses in another form the same thought, indicating plainly that the heart is unaffected by what goes into the mouth, while what comes out of the mouth indicates what is in the heart.

Ver. 19. **For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts,** i. e., reasonings, purposes, not mere notions. The criminality of acts proceeds from the purpose; for these acts man is responsible. The plural form indicates that these sins are common and notorious. Mark adds a number of others. The list begins with 'evil thoughts,' and ends with open blasphemies (of the Son of man and the Holy Spirit), in which sin against better light and knowledge completes itself (see 12: 20-32).

20 these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

CHAPTER 15: 21-28.

A Visit to the Borders of Tyre and Sidon: the Woman of Canaan.

21 And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the
22 parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaan-
itish woman came out from those borders, and cried,
saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of Da-

Ver. 20. **These are the things which defile the man.** Ceremonial impurity is insignificant compared with moral impurity. Yet Christians now are as slow to learn this as the disciples were.

A Visit to the Borders of Phœnicia. The Woman of Canaan. Vers. 21-28.

CONTENTS. The order is chronological (comp. Mark 7: 24-8: 10; especially the miracle peculiar to that Gospel). This visit of our Lord to Gentile regions followed an attack from the Pharisees. (Comp. the course of Paul Acts 13: 46). The interview with the heathen woman is striking and prophetic. The Jews reject the blessing; the Gentiles seek it with longing desire. The heathen world had been prepared for Him who was 'a light to lighten the Gentiles.' He confined himself to the land of Israel; but once at least he made an exception and visited the borders of Phœnicia. The incident was timely. It prepared the Apostles for their universal mission, and also for the prophecy (chap. 16: 21) of His death at Jerusalem. They must see the faith of the Gentiles before they could learn the faithlessness of the Jews.

Ver. 21. **And Jesus withdrew.** Partly in consequence of the hostility of the Pharisees; partly to seek retirement (Mark 7: 24); He designed also, to signify, through the incident which was to follow, the future admission of the Gentiles into His kingdom.—**Into the parts.**—Mark 7: 24: 'borders.' He may not have passed much beyond the frontier. **Tyre and Sidon.** The two chief cities of Phœnicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, north of Galilee, inhabited by Gentiles, and famous for commerce and wealth, but now in a dilapidated condition under Turkish misgovernment. They are twenty-one miles apart. The modern Sidon (Saida) is reviving, and the seat of a prosperous American Presbyterian mission. The oranges of Sidon are the best in Syria (better than those of Jaffa). The Jewish world was closing against our Lord; the Gentile world was not yet open. He sought seclusion near the border line, but 'He could not be hid' (Mark 7: 24). The heathen mother found Him; she was a type of the long-
ing, suffering Gentile world.

vid; my daughter is grievously vexed with a ¹ devil.
 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples
 came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for
 24 she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I was
 not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 25 But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help

¹ Gr. *demon*.

Ver. 22. **A Canaanitish** (or, Canaanite) **woman**. Her race, not her country, is thus noted. Mark, 'a Greek,' *i. e.*, a heathen by religion, 'a Syro-Phœnician by nation.' The difference shows the independence of the two Evangelists. Canaan (*i. e.*, Lowland) included the sea-coast from Sidon to Gaza. The Phœnicians were the descendants of the remnant of the old Canaanites and worshippers of Baal.—**Came out**. Probably from a distance.—**Son of David**. One of the most popular designations of the Messiah. She knew and probably shared in the Messianic hopes of the Jews. At least she had heard of our Lord, and believed that He could help her. His fame spread beyond Galilee, and people from Tyre and Sidon had come to hear His discourses, Luke 6: 17. Her request: **Have mercy on me**, exhibits her faith, far more than the title she used. Like a true mother, she made the misery of her daughter her own (Bengel).—**Grievously vexed with a demon**, lit., 'badly demonized.' Such possessions were therefore not confined to the Jews.

Ver. 23. **But he answered her not a word**. (Vers. 23-25, peculiar to Matthew). By this unwonted silence and apparent indifference our Lord would draw out her faith; and prove it to His disciples. They were Jews, and must learn to intercede for a heathen woman, before they could carry the gospel to the Gentiles. (Others unnecessarily assume that Jesus, as a man, really changed His purpose in consequence of the persistent request of the woman working on His sympathy and inducing Him to make an exception from His rule to confine His work to Israel.) **Send her away**. They did not mean: refuse her request (see ver. 24): grant it, and so get rid of her. But their plea for the woman was harsher than the Master's silence. They were vexed by her importunity.—**For she crieth after us**. Arousing public attention, which they knew the Lord would avoid.

Ver. 24. **I was not sent**, etc. His personal mission was only to the Jews as their previous mission had been (ch. 10: 5, 6). The exceptions all pointed to the future spiritual significance of the phrase: **house of Israel**. This answer might suggest to the disciples: 'Is not such a one really a daughter of the spiritual Israel, though a woman of Canaan?' It was not a refusal, but a postponement, to educate her faith and train the disciples for their world-wide mission.

Ver. 25. **But she came**. Perhaps into the house (Mark 7: 24), but more probably to where He waited for her in the way. Her faith

26 me. And he answered and said, It is not meet to take
 27 the children's ¹ bread and cast it to the dogs. But she
 said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs
 28 which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

¹ Or, loaf.

was more manifest, as the Lord gave her opportunity.—**Lord.** Reverential address.—**Help me.** A touch of nature in the mother's prayer! Maternal love remains even in heathenism; often leading to Christ.

Ver. 26. **It is not meet.** The reply is not harsh, nor is it a refusal (Mark: 'Let the children first be fed'). It calls forth the woman's faith, and convinces the disciples that it is 'proper' to bless this heathen woman.—**To take** (lit., 'to take away') **the children's bread.** All present understood this as referring to the blessings provided for the Jews. 'Charity begins at home.'—**To the dogs**, lit., 'little dogs.' A reference to the large, savage dogs so common in the East, would be very contemptuous; household and pet dogs are meant; a sense the woman skilfully used. The history of Tobias and his dog shows the friendly relation between the dog and his master (Tobit 5: 16). The Jews called the impure Gentiles 'dogs,' and the Mohammedans apply it to Jews and Christians.

Ver. 27. **Yea, Lord.** She accepts the Lord's word and makes an argument of it.—**For even** (not 'yet') **the dogs.** Not as one of the children; but as a humble dependent, she asks only what falls to such: **the crumbs.** Possibly a reference to the pieces of bread on which, according to the ancient usage, the hands were wiped; but the usual sense is more natural. 'She was, as it were, under the edge of the table, close on the confines of Israel's feast.' (Alford).—The woman had been earnest in gaining a hearing at all. Her answer shows a quickness of mind, humility also, joined with true wisdom: in her persevering faith she saw the mind of Christ even in the seemingly repulsive figure.

Ver. 28. **Great is thy faith.** She was a true daughter of Abraham, though not according to the flesh (comp. Rom. 2: 29; 4: 16). The greatest faith had been shown by Gentiles (comp. chap. 8: 10); and of this woman's characteristics, 'faith' was not only the crown, but the source.—**And her daughter was healed from that hour.** Mark (7: 30) describes her return home. As in the case of the Gentile centurion, the cure was performed at a distance. The intermediate link in both cases was strong faith combined with affection for the person healed. A hint is thus given in regard to the effect of intercessory prayer.

CHAPTER 15: 29-39.

Return to the Sea of Galilee; Feeding of the Four Thousand.

29 And Jesus departed thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and
 30 sat there. And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet;
 31 and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel.

The Return to the Sea of Galilee; the Feeding of the Four Thousand.

Chap. 15: 29-39.

The second miraculous feeding differs from the first (chap. 14: 15-21) in the number of the people fed (four thousand instead of five thousand), the amount of the provision (seven loaves and a few fishes, instead of five loaves and two fishes), the remnant (seven large baskets full for twelve small ones); but the truth symbolized by the two miracles is the same: Christ, the bread of Life, sufficient for all. All Evangelists report the first miraculous feeding; Matthew and Mark (8: 1-10) also the second. Our Lord refers to both, 16: 9, 10; Mark 18: 19, 20. We must therefore accept both as distinct facts. Criticism must yield to testimony. There is no appeal from Christ's authority.

Ver. 29. **Departed thence.** Mark 7: 31 is fuller. He probably made a circuit, passing southeastward, at the foot of the Lebanon range, till he reached the mountainous (and solitary) district on the eastern shore of the **Sea of Galilee.**—**And sat there.** To obtain here the rest He had sought in 'the parts of Tyre and Sidon.'

Ver. 30. **Great multitudes.** Even in this retired place. He was not allowed to rest long. The crowds came **having with them**, *i. e.*, bringing with them a great variety of afflicted ones.—**Dumb.** Mark mentions one case in particular (7: 32-35).—**Maimed.** The first mention of this class, *i. e.*, those wounded or diseased in hand or foot; our word 'maimed' implies a loss of the member.—**Cast them down.** This may refer to the rudeness of these mountaineers, or to their haste, or to their confidence; probably the three explanations are to be combined.

Ver. 31. **Wondered.** Comp. Mark 7: 37. The people had probably heard of, but never witnessed, His power.—**The dumb speaking, etc.** This is the form of the original.—**They glorified the God of Israel.** They were not heathen, but Jews. Yet living on the bor-

32 And Jesus called unto him his disciples, and said,
 I have compassion on the multitude, because they
 continue with me now three days and have nothing
 to eat: and I would not send them away fasting,
 33 lest haply they faint in the way. And the disciples
 say unto him, Whence should we have so many
 loaves in a desert place, as to fill so great a multi-
 34 tude? And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves
 have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few small
 35 fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit
 36 down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves

ders, they seem to have been affected by heathen notions, and half-recognized other gods.

Ver. 32. **And Jesus called unto him his disciples.** Our Lord Himself takes the first step (comp. chap. 14: 15). This case was more urgent; the crowd was not composed of those on the way to the Passover, and had been three days with Him.—**Three days.** The third day was passing; so they were hungry and destitute of provisions, but not yet in actual distress.—**Faint in the way, i. e.,** because exhausted from the want of food on their way home in that mountainous region. The Lord's compassion was called out by their physical want, which, however, resulted from their desire to be near Him.

Ver. 33. **Whence should we have so many loaves.** The question may seem strange after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand (14: 15-21). But it was not so strange as their subsequent reasoning about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (chap. 16: 6-12). Our own forgetfulness and unbelief should make us wonder less at the 'little faith' of the disciples. In the previous case the disciples emphasized the amount of bread needed ('two hundred shilling-worth,' Mark 6: 37); in this, the fact that they are in a **desert place**.—**Fill.** The long fast called for plentiful provision. Comp. Mark 8: 4, where the same word is translated 'satisfy' in the common version.

Ver. 34. **How many loaves have ye?** In the other case a lad had the provisions; here the disciples themselves. The loaves were *seven* in this case, *five* in the other, the number of little fishes is not specified.

Ver. 35. **And he commanded.** The correct reading joins this verse closely with ver. 36. In the other case the disciples arranged the multitude (Luke 9: 14; John 6: 10).—**On the ground,** not 'on the grass' (chap. 14: 19); they were 'in a wilderness' (ver. 33), a desolate region, in this case.

Vers. 36, 37. The mode of distribution (and the miracle itself) was

and the fishes; and he gave thanks and brake, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces, seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And he sent away the multitudes, and entered into the boat, and came into the borders of Magadan.

CHAPTER 16: 1-12.

The Jews seek a Sign, and our Lord warns His Disciples against their Doctrine.

16 AND the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and tempting him asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

precisely the same.—**That which remained of the broken pieces, seven baskets full.** In the other case 'twelve.' The word rendered 'baskets' is a different one (σπίρις) from the one used in the other miracle (κόφινος), and means a *larger* basket for provision. The same difference is observed in chap. 16: 9, 10.

Ver. 38. **Four thousand**, instead of 'five thousand.' In this case the material miracle seems not to have been so great, as respects the number fed and the fragments remaining. All these variations, which show no gradation between the miracles, and betray no special design, prove that the Evangelists give true accounts of two distinct miracles.

Ver. 39. **Into the boat.** Probably one awaiting Him.—**Into the borders of Magadan**, according to the best authorities. ('Magdalan' is also found.) Mark: 'Into the parts of Dalmanutha.' This was a village or glen about a mile from Magdala, and is identified with the modern *Ain-el-Barideh*, 'the cold fountain,' where there are ruins. Our Lord, pursued by the hostility of the Jews and seeking retirement, landed at an obscure locality between the two places. The site of Magdala ('Migdol,' a watch-tower, Josh. 19: 38) is on the western shore of the lake of Galilee, three miles north of Tiberias (Tabarieh) directly east of Cana. It was probably the home of Mary Magdalene. It is now a squalid Moslem village, called *Mejdel*.

The Jews seek a Sign, and our Lord warns His Disciples against their Doctrine. Chap. 16: 1-12.

CONTENTS. In consequence of the opposition of Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem (chap. 15: 1-21), our Lord had withdrawn to heathen and unfrequented regions. On His return, He lands at a retired locality in Galilee; the Pharisees seek Him, on

2 But he answered and said unto them, ¹ When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the heaven is
 3 red. And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot
 4 *discern* the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign

¹ The following words, to the end of ver. 3, are omitted by some of the most ancient and other important authorities.

this occasion, in company with the Sadducees, tempting Him again. He then withdraws to the eastern side of the sea (ver. 5), not far from Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22). The connection of events shows the reason for these repeated journeys, which seem purposeless to many readers. Galilee being almost completely closed to Him, it was time for the decided confession (vers. 13-20) and revelation (vers. 21-28) which follow. On the way the unbelief and ignorance of the Twelve were manifested (vers. 7 sqq.); instruction was given them which would separate them more decidedly from the Jews (vers. 6, 12). It is one of the Twelve that tells of their weakness at this important crisis.—Our Lord visited Galilee but once more, and then to take leave of it (comp. chaps. 17: 22; 19: 1).

Ver. 1. **And Sadducees.** First mention of them in antagonism to Christ. Opposed to each other, these two parties united against our Lord; opposition to the truth overbears other antagonisms. Extremes of error constantly meet in opposing our Lord's people and cause.—**Tempting**, or 'trying' Him, putting Him to the proof. But He never responded to doubt and disbelief; only to faith. To accede to their wish would foster their carnal hopes.—**A sign from heaven.** Comp. chap. 12: 38. It was the common belief that visible signs from heaven (like Elijah's fire, 1 Kings 18: 38) would attend the Advent of the Messiah. Their request implied that the many mighty works He had already wrought were not of heavenly origin. 'The Jews require a sign' (1 Cor. 1: 22); formalism and self-righteousness tend to superstition.

Ver. 2. **When it is evening, ye say, Fair weather**, etc. In answer to their demand for a 'sign from heaven,' our Lord cites two weather 'signs,' such as men look for, 'in the face of the heaven.' These signs (cited, not given by our Lord) hold good in other regions. The design was to rebuke their carnal and sensuous expectation (see ver. 3). The translation of the E. V. 'sky' for 'heaven' hides the point of the answer. You watch the physical heavens and are weather-wise, but blind to the signs of the spiritual firmament.

Ver. 3. Symbolical meaning (not to be pressed); 'The red at the close of the Old Testament betokened fair weather at hand. Similarly the red sky at the commencement of the New Testament indicated the storm about to descend upon Israel. But they were incapable of un-

be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah. And he left them, and departed.

5 And the disciples came to the other side and forgot
6 to take ¹ bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Saddu-

¹ Gr. *loaves*.

derstanding either one or other of these signs.' (Lange's Comm.)—**Ye cannot discern.** Not a question, but an assertion.—**The signs of the times, i. e.,** the fulfilment of prophecy; the miracles performed before them, showing that the Messiah had come. The signs of the times are the signs of Providence. The Jews, with the promise of the Messiah, ought to have been as quick in discerning the signs of His coming as those of the weather. Proverbially so keen to discern the signs of the times as affecting trade, etc., they have always shown lack of spiritual discernment. But all men are naturally slow in discovering the spiritual significance of passing events.

(Vers. 2 and 3 are omitted in the two oldest MSS., the Sinaitic and the Vatican, probably from an oversight, and bracketed by Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort as doubtful, but supported by most MSS. and ancient versions. The omission is more easily accounted for than the insertion, as the verses are wanting in Mark.)

Ver. 4. Comp. chap. xii. 39 (exactly the same words). The audience may have been in part the same, hence no explanation is added here.—**And he left them and departed.** Abruptly, it would seem. As events proved, He now gave them up to their blindness, but with pain at their unbelief. See on Mark 8: 12: 'And he sighed deeply in his spirit.'

Ver. 5. **And the disciples came to the other side.** To the eastern shore. It is improbable that this conversation took place during the voyage (see below).—**Forgot to take bread.** Provisions were not indispensable for so short a voyage. The original suggests that the neglect occurred after they landed. They had but one loaf in the boat (as Mark observes with his usual accuracy in details, chap. 8: 14), and started on a land journey to Caesarea Philippi (ver. 13), through a region comparatively desolate, without making provision for it. The visit to Bethsaida on the way (Mark 8: 22), at a time when our Lord was avoiding public notice, may have been for the purpose of obtaining a supply.

Ver. 6. **The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** 'Leaven:' figure for a permeating spiritual influence, generally an evil one (comp. however chap. 13: 33). Their want of bread made the illustration apt. They were now withdrawing, both bodily and spiritually, from the Jews; hence there is probably a reference to Exod. 12: 15-17; comp. 1 Cor. 5: 7. The two opposing sects are here connected (comp. ver. 1); Mark, however (8: 15), substitutes 'the leaven of He-

7 cees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying,
 8 ¹ We took no ² bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O
 ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, be-
 9 cause ye have no ² bread? Do ye not yet perceive, nei-
 ther remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and
 10 how many ³ baskets ye took up? Neither the seven
 loaves of the four thousand, and how many ³ baskets
 11 ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I
 spake not to you concerning ² bread? But beware of
 12 the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then un-
 derstood they how that he bade them not beware of the

¹ Or, It is because we took no bread.

² Gr. loaves.

³ Basket in vers. 9 and 10 represents different Greek words.

rod.' The worldly Herodians were the Sadducees of Galilee. They had already joined the Pharisees in opposing Christ, and Herod may have been in some alliance with them. Politicians often coquet with religious parties and make use of them to gain votes and power.

Ver. 7. **And they reasoned among themselves.** In their own hearts and then with each other; not in dispute, but in earnest conversation.—**We took no bread.** An unspiritual but not altogether unreasonable thought. As Jews they would naturally think about not eating bread with these sects; but this would imply separation from the whole nation, and separate provision for their wants, which they had forgotten. General anxiety about worldly things would follow.

Ver. 8. **And Jesus perceiving it said.** This avoids the incorrect notion that He took some time to discover it.—**O ye of little faith.** Words applied to them before (chap. 8: 26; 14: 31) on occasions of great weakness. After such miracles their cares were unbelieving.

Ver. 9. **Do ye not yet perceive.** Mark (8: 17, 18) is more full. Besides want of faith, they had shown great want of perception.

Ver. 10. **Baskets** (συνρίδας). A different word in the original from that used in ver. 9 (κέρφινος), but the same one we find in the account of the miracle (chap. 15: 37). This difference incidentally confirms the truthfulness of the account.

Ver. 11. **How is it that ye do not perceive, etc.** The recent instruction (chap. 15: 19, 20) that eating did not defile a man, should have prevented the surmise about not eating bread with the Pharisees and Sadducees; the miracles should have shown them that lack of earthly bread was not referred to. Mark stops at this point in the narrative.—**But beware.** This is the correct reading.

Ver. 12. **The teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** Comp. Luke 12: 1. The leaven of the Pharisees is 'hypocrisy.' But

leaven of ¹ bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

CHAPTER 16: 13-28.

The Discourse of our Lord with His Disciples. Peter's Confession. Prediction of His own Passion and the Sufferings of His Followers.

13 Now when Jesus came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men

¹ Gr. *loaves*.

the Sadducees, the 'liberal Jews' of that age, went to the other extreme. The reference is, therefore, not to what they taught in common, or to a formulated body of doctrine, but to the mode and spirit of their teaching. In both cases *hypocrisy*; in the Pharisees hypocritical formalism, in the Sadducees hypocritical liberalism, both equally destitute of humility and love which are the soul of true piety. These two apparently antagonistic tendencies have been practically united ever since in opposing Christ. Without Him strict outward morality ('Pharisees') and free inquiry ('Sadducees') inevitably become hypocritical. Comp. on Mark 8: 15.—The emphasis here laid on false 'teaching' is suggestive. Principles, tendencies, 'teachings,' are most permeating, and if evil, most dangerous. To those who after all the lessons of history, and of experience, fail to see this, we may apply the words of our Lord: 'How is it that ye do not perceive?'

The Discourse of our Lord with His Disciples. Peter's Confession. Prediction of His own Passion and the Sufferings of His Followers, vers. 13-28.

CONTENTS. Comp. Mark 8: 27-9: 1; Luke 9: 18-27. The confession (ver. 16), and the revelation (ver. 21), constitute an epoch in the training of the Apostles. Despite their little faith and want of understanding, they cling to Him as the Christ of God. He calls for a confession of this. Peter, the usual spokesman, makes it. Then He reveals His passion and the sufferings of His people with Him and for His sake. This revelation was at first rejected, never received by the disciples in its full force until it became a fact. The important statement regarding the foundation of His Church (ver. 18) is not, as many suppose, the central thought, still less the primary of Peter. Neither Mark nor Luke refer to it. It is, however, appropriately introduced here, where the *confession* of the Church (*actively* with the mouth, and *passively* through suffering for His sake) is made to centre about His *Passion*, the ground and motive for that confession. These events occurred in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi on the northern extremity of the Holy Land, on the border of the Gentiles, at the foot of Hermon, the snow-crowned monarch of mountains, and at the chief source of the Jordan, in the most picturesque part of Palestine (called by Dean Stanley the 'Syrian Tivoli'). On the locality see Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, pp. 355 sqq.

14 say ¹ that the Son of man is? And they said, Some
say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jere-
15 miah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them,
16 But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the

¹ Many ancient authorities read that *I the Son of man am*. See Mark 8: 27; Luke 9: 18.

Ver. 13. **The parts of Cæsarea Philippi.** Mark: 'villages.' Probably not the city itself, but retired localities in the neighborhood, better adapted for private intercourse. The city was situated at the foot of Mount Hermon, and formerly bore the name *Puneas* (or *Pan-ion*), the sanctuary of Pan. Philip the Tetrarch beautified it, and called it *Cæsarea*; his name (*Philippi*) being commonly added to distinguish it from Cæsarea on the sea-coast (where Paul was afterwards imprisoned). The name was changed to *Neronias* by Agrippa II.; but the village which now marks the site is called *Banias*, a modification of its old heathen name. It is the best camping station before crossing Mount Hermon to Damascus. The region may be called the Switzerland of Palestine.—**He asked his disciples.** While 'in the way' (Mark 8: 27), not to that region, but from some retired spot, where He had been praying (Luke 9: 18).—**Who** (not 'whom,' as in E. V., which is ungrammatical) **do men say that the Son of man is?** The common reading: 'that *I the Son of man am*,' is an alteration to bring out more fully the implied thought: 'I am the Son of man, the Messiah.'

Ver. 14. **Some say.** The people had never been fully convinced that He was the Messiah. In the presence of opposition they only held that He was a remarkable personage.—**John the Baptist.** Herod's opinion, see chap. 14: 2; Luke 9: 7. He shared the popular belief in transmigration.—**Elijah.** The forerunner of the Messiah.—**Jeremiah,** etc. Some really believed that the old prophets would re-appear in another form. As His preaching became more denunciatory, they would think of Jeremiah. The whole verse shows the change in popular opinion throughout Galilee. These are all uncertain human opinions concerning Christ, and amount to nothing. To them is opposed the certain conviction of faith resting on God's revelation. See next verses.

Ver. 15. **But who say ye,** etc. The question does not imply that they doubted His Messiahship, but is a demand for a decided expression of their conviction that He was *the Messiah*. This is the main point in Peter's reply.

Ver. 16. **Simon Peter;** answering for the others as well as for himself.—**Thou art the Christ** ('the Messiah'), **the Son of the living God.** Peter's reply is a decided, solemn, profound confession, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God in a specific sense. This specific sense is clearly vindicated: (1) by the presence of the article, which otherwise might have been omitted; (2) by the addition

17 living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father

of the phrase itself, otherwise unnecessary, since the confession of His Messiahship includes all lower ideas; (3) by the word 'living,' which is not opposed to dead idols, but indicates that God is the source of all life, and that His Son is the fountain of life to men; (4) by the declaration that God had revealed this to Peter, since men of themselves readily form lower conceptions of Christ. This is the germ of the true and full statement respecting the Divine-human Person of Christ. The germ itself was a revelation, and its development was through subsequent revelation to the Apostles. The doctrine of Christ's Person is not the result of human speculation, but a truth revealed by the Father of our Lord respecting His only Begotten Son. As at the beginning of His ministry, our Lord received an attestation from man (John the Baptist) preceding the attestation of His Sonship from heaven (chap. 3: 17), so at this turning-point a confession from man precedes the renewed attestation from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration (chap. 17: 5).

The first and fundamental confession of the Christian faith and the fruitful germ of all other confessions. An answer to the question of Christ. Peter's creed was very simple; it had but one article, but the most important, which gives importance to all others. The Apostles' Creed, so called, with Christ in the centre, is a legitimate development of this confession.

Ver. 17. **Blessed art thou.** An answering confession of Peter as an object of the Divine favor, a subject of Divine grace (comp. Rom. 10: 9). Our Lord must have spoken these words with a deep emotion of joy; as on other occasions he wondered at the belief or unbelief of men (Mark 6: 6; Luke 7: 9), and felt anger (Mark 3: 5), sorrow, and shed tears (John 11: 35; Luke 19: 4). These emotions belonged to His true humanity.—**Simon Bar-Jonah**, son of Jonah. His human name and paternity are introduced, probably with an allusion to the title: 'Son of man' (ver. 13); there is a similarity in the phrases in the Aramaic language. Simon confesses his belief in the higher title of Christ; our Lord refers to Simon's higher name, Peter.—**For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.** The knowledge was not from any human source (comp. Gal. 1: 16).—**But my Father who is in heaven.** The real knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is and must be a matter of Divine revelation. Men may, of themselves, hold such a doctrine as part of a creed; but a belief that influences heart and life is the result of a Divine revelation made in us. Peter's confession was based on such a belief. For the trials of faith before them during the remainder of our Lord's earthly life the disciples needed a knowledge of His Person far above the carnal notions of the Messiah; the reply of Peter

18 which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art ¹Peter, and upon this ²rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail

¹ Gr. *Petros*.

² Gr. *petra*.

shows that they had it, and our Lord tells whence it came. Comp. Faber's beautiful hymn; 'O gift of gifts! O grace of faith!'

Ver. 18. **And I also say unto thee.** In answer to thy confession. The meaning of our Lord's words has been angrily discussed, and misapprehended by Romanists and Protestants alike.—**Thou art Peter** ('petros' = stone), **and upon this rock** ('petra' = rock) **I will build my church.** The play of the words in Greek is lost in the E. V. In French it can be rendered: *Tu es Pierre et sur cette pierre*, but the distinction of gender is lost. The name Peter had been prophetically given to Simon long before (John 1: 42), but is now solemnly bestowed as a prophecy of his future mission in laying the foundations of the Church deep and strong on the Rock of rocks. It is a masculine form of the Greek word, meaning 'rock,' or 'stone' rather, i. e., fragment of a rock. In the Aramaic dialect of the country the same word ('Cepha,' hellenized into 'Kephas') may have been used in both clauses; but there must be good reason for the change in the Greek.

EXPLANATIONS. 1. The phrase refers to *Peter*, but as a *confessor*, as in Christ, representing the other Apostles. This is the correct view. It explains both the resemblance and the difference of the words: 'Petros' and 'petra.' From personal qualities he was the first among equals, and as he had represented the Apostles in the confession, so now in the Lord's declaration. He was also the first to preach on the day of Pentecost, when the Church was fully established among the Jews, and the first to preach to the Gentiles (to Cornelius and his family). When he was disobedient and dissuading, censure was pronounced upon him (vers. 22, 23); hence only *confessing* Peter is meant. The other Apostles are included; since what is addressed to Peter in the next verse is afterwards repeated to all the Apostles, chap. 18: 18; comp. also Eph. 2: 20; Rev. 21: 14.

2. The *Romanist view*: Peter is referred to, but as the *official* head of the Twelve; as such the *Bishop of Rome* is his *successor*. Were this correct, Mark and Luke would not have failed to record the saying in their accounts of this interview. Further objections: (1.) It obliterated the distinction between *petros* and *petra*, and would have been more naturally expressed 'Thou art Peter, and on thee I will build my church;' (2.) it is inconsistent with the true nature of the architectural figure; the foundation of a building is one and abiding, and not constantly renewed and changed; (3.) it confounds priority of time with permanent superiority of rank; (4.) it confounds the apostolate, which, strictly speaking, is not transferable, but confined to the original personal disciples of Christ and inspired organs of the Holy Spirit, with the post-apostolic episcopate; (5.) it involves an injustice to the other

Apostles, who, as a body, are expressly called the foundation, or foundation stones of the Church; (6) it contradicts the whole spirit of Peter's first Epistle, which is strongly anti-hierarchical, and disclaims any superiority over his 'fellow-presbyters;' (7) it is opposed by Paul, who was independent of Peter, and severely rebuked him at Antioch for an act of inconsistency (Gal. 2: 11 sqq); (8) finally, it rests on assumptions, unproven, either exegetically or historically, namely, the transferability of Peter's primacy, and its actual transfer to the bishop, not of Jerusalem nor of Antioch (where Peter certainly was), but of Rome exclusively. Comp. the note in Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, pp. 374 ff.

3. *The confessional view*: Peter's confession alone is referred to. Only partially correct. Objections: (1) This can scarcely refer to something so remote as the confession: on this theory the clause 'thou art Peter,' has no force whatever, and our Lord is represented as making a play on words almost meaningless; (2) The Church is founded on living persons, not on abstract doctrines and confessions: (3) the whole context is against it: the confession about the Person of Christ, the solemn utterance of Peter's usual name (ver. 17), the personal statement of ver. 19. Most later Protestant commentators reject it.

4. Christ means *His own Person*. So Augustine (in later years), and many excellent commentators.* This view claims that *petros* means a stone, and *petra* a rock, so that Peter is a living stone from Christ the true Rock, and whosoever would become a living stone, a 'petros,' must make this true confession of Christ, the Rock, on whom as God and man the Church will be built. Objections: (1) The distinction between the words may not have existed in the Aramaic language, probably used by our Lord; (2) 'this' is made to refer to something not stated; we are forced to insert in the narrative, that our Lord pointed to Himself. (3) Our Lord is indeed the Rock of Ages in the highest sense, and the foundation of the Church (1 Cor. 10: 4; 3: 11), but in this passage ('I will build'), and usually, He is represented as the *Builder* and *Master* of the spiritual temple, into which living stones are built, the first ones laid (the Apostles) being the foundation. This view confounds the figures, and would make Christ represent Himself in one sentence as the architect and as the foundation of the building. Comp. on this most important and most controverted passage my annotations to Lange on *Matthew*, pp. 293-298.

My Church. This word occurs only twice in the Gospels (here in the general and chap. 18: 17 in the local sense). The Greek word, meaning 'an assembly called out' (with a technical sense in classical Greek), was used to translate the Hebrew expression: *Kahal*, 'congregation.' While it usually means a local congregation, it must be taken

* Quite recently also Dr. Plumptre (in Bp. Ellicott's *Com.*), who explains: 'Thou art the Rock-Apostle; and yet not the Rock on which the Church is to be built. It is enough for thee to have found the Rock, and to have built on the one foundation.' But this implies an antithesis which is not supported by the context.

19 against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the

here in a general sense of the whole Christian Church. It refers to a congregation distinct from the Jewish ('*My church*'); the first intimation of such a separation. Its foundation is only predicted ('I will build'). It is not the precise equivalent of 'the kingdom of heaven,' so often spoken of before this time by our Lord. 'The kingdom of heaven' is the new dispensation of grace from heaven of which our Lord was Ruler and Dispenser; His Church was to be an organized and visible congregation of the faithful, manifesting and extending by its worship and ministry that kingdom. The next verse points to such a visible organization, as does the fact that *confessing* Apostles are spoken of as the foundation. The Jewish idea was that it was to be a 'temporal power,' a State, as the Papal theory allows. This Church is represented as one edifice having one Builder, one foundation, one plan, and hence with a continuity in its history and development; but the New Testament nowhere prophesies or enjoins its external *uniformity*. The sacraments and the ministry were directly instituted, but little else. All the rest is left to Christian liberty. Outward form is required to prevent anarchy; but the history of the Apostolic Church implies that this outward form may be modified by ecclesiastical enactments which, however useful, cannot be of equal authority with the direct institutions of Christ and His Apostles. Outward unity as the free expression of internal or spiritual unity, is a great blessing; but it has generally been the result of ecclesiastical or civil tyranny. Visible unity is the end, rather than the means, of the growth of Christ's Church, and that unity will not be uniformity, but include endless variety. Essential unity is maintained, in the confession of the Personal Christ, by believing persons, in the participation of the divinely instituted Sacraments, in the preaching of the Word by an ordained ministry. All these essentials centre in Christ.—**And the gates of Hades.** An oriental phrase for 'the power of the kingdom of death.' Comp. Isa. 38: 10. The figure is that of a strong castle. Hades is here personified as an all-devouring conqueror. The gates of an eastern city where judgment was held are the symbol of ruling power. (The name of the government of the Sultan is called 'the Sublime Porte.') In Rev. 6: 8, Death rides on a pale horse, and Hades follows after him. On the difference of Hades and Gehenna (hell), see note on ch. 11: 23.—**Shall not prevail against it.** The Old Testament organization would perish by violence; but no adverse power shall prevail against Christ's Church. The particular reference is to the spiritual victory of *life over death*. A wonderful prophecy of the indestructibility of Christ's Church before it was founded, uttered at a time of apparent failure, in the face of persecution and death, but verified more and more as Christianity progresses and goes on conquering and to conquer. There is no parallel to this prediction and its fulfilment in the history of the world.

Ver. 19. **Unto thee.** To Peter, who is addressed throughout;

kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 20 Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

but as chap. 18: 18 includes the other Apostles in the second promise of this verse, they are probably included here also.—**The keys of the kingdom of heaven.** Power to open and shut. Comp. Isa. 22: 20 sqq., and Rev. 1: 18; 3: 7. Peter first admitted Jews (on the day of Pentecost) and Gentiles (Cornelius) to the Church; and first excluded offenders (Ananias and Sapphira; Simon Magus). This promise in its full sense does not extend beyond the Apostles, who needed special power for their foundation work; for the keys are not the keys of the Church, but 'of the kingdom of heaven.' It is applicable to the Christian ministry, only in the subordinate sense of proclaiming the word and exercising prudential and corrective (not punitive) discipline.—**And whatsoever thou shalt bind,** etc. Jewish usage would explain: 'bind' and 'loose,' as equivalent to *forbid* and *permit* (see the passages collected by Lightfoot); the reference therefore is to the power of legislation in the Church ('on earth') in the case of the Apostles, Peter being their representative; this was in accordance with heavenly design ('in heaven'). *Things* are probably referred to here ('whatsoever'); in the previous clause, *persons* (admitted or excluded). 'To bind' is to impose an obligation, as Peter and the Apostles impose the precepts of holy living upon the followers of Christ; 'to loose' is to abolish a precept, as the Apostles did in Jerusalem when they declared that circumcision was not required of the Gentile converts. The expression was common: 'The school of Sham-mai binds (a certain ordinance), the school of Hillel looses it.' The power seems to be judicial also (comp. chap. 18: 17, 18). This promise is, in its full sense, likewise applicable only to the Apostles, on whom it was conferred afterwards (18: 18), without a word about a transmission of that power to successors at Rome or elsewhere. Most of the difficulties connected with the interpretation of this passage are obviated by considering that the full gospel could not be preached until after the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord; the Apostles, who had to lay the foundation and be the foundation, must therefore have knowledge and authority which no one after them needs or can rightly claim. The foundation thus laid, the Church enters upon a conflict in which final victory, though long delayed, is assured. Church authorities must indeed legislate and exercise judicial power, but not as having final and supreme power nor with any assurance of infallibility. For such binding and loosing on earth they may implore, but cannot assert, heavenly direction and sanction.

Ver. 20. **That they should tell no man.** Until our Lord Himself announced His Messiahship before the Sanhedrin (chap. 26: 64),

- 21 From that time began ¹Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.
- 22 And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, ²Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Jesus Christ*.

² Or, *God have mercy on thee*.

the Christian acknowledgment was to be kept separate from the carnal expectations of the Jews.

Ver. 21. **From that time began Jesus.** The confession prepared them for the revelation. We infer that He spoke often and familiarly on this topic, to prepare them for their own trials, and to impress upon them the truth they deemed so strange. (Comp. chap. 17: 22, 23; 20: 17-19, and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke.)—**He must go.** The necessity of His sufferings was revealed: not in all its bearings, since after His resurrection He must still ask: 'Ought not Christ to have suffered,' etc. (Luke 24: 26).—**Unto Jerusalem.** Peculiar to Matthew; in keeping with the character of his Gospel.—**Suffer many things.** His sufferings included more than the outward persecutions.—**Of the elders,** etc. These classes represented the whole Jewish nation. Christ did not reject the covenant people; they rejected Him.—**And be killed.** A startling announcement to the disciples, and yet Daniel (9: 26) and Isaiah (53: 4-10) had foretold it. 'The cross' is the necessary climax of His sufferings.—**The third day be raised up.**—'According to the Scriptures.' (1 Cor. 15: 4.) Despite this plain announcement, they were full of doubt and despondency after His death. The idea of a suffering and dying Messiah upset all their carnal Jewish notions, and was the hardest lesson for them to learn. They understood it only after the Resurrection of the Master. They wished to gain the Crown without the Cross.

Ver. 22. **Then Peter took him.** Either laid hold on Him to interrupt Him, or took Him aside. The explanation, 'took by the hand,' for friendly entreaty, is unwarranted.—**And began to rebuke him.** He did not proceed far in this chiding.—**Be it far from thee, Lord.** An abbreviated prayer. Lit., [God be] 'propitious to thee,' equivalent either to, God be gracious to thee, or spare thyself. Comp. our 'gracious!' or 'Mercy on thee!'—**This shall never be unto thee.** An over-confident declaration, betraying pride as well as opposition to the purpose of God ('must go,' ver. 21) revealed by our Lord. Peter was bold as confessor and as opposer, was impulsive, perhaps vain and ambitious. He was always in a hurry, and went off half-cocked. He was 'consistently inconsistent.' The Roman Church has faithfully repeated the failings, rather than the virtues of Peter.

23 unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the 24 things of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny him-

Ver. 23. **But he turned.** Not turned from Peter, but turned round.—**Said unto Peter.** In the presence of all the disciples (Mark 8: 33), whom Peter again represented to a certain extent.—**Get thee behind me,** 'avaunt,' 'begone.' Comp. chap. 4: 10, where the same words are addressed to Satan himself. It was a recurrence of the same temptation.—**Satan.** The meaning 'adversary' is too weak. There was a Satanic influence at work in Peter, though he was not conscious of it. 'Has Satan come again?' The Apostle himself was no doubt startled. Satan is most busy in seducing us when we have been most highly exalted by Christ.—**Thou art a stumbling-block unto me,** or 'stone of stumbling.' Perhaps a further allusion to Peter's name. Thou art no more a rock of the Church, but a rock of offence. Comp. Isa. 8: 14, and Peter's own words, 1 Pet. 2: 7, in which the same contrast is found. Not without a caution for those claiming to be the successors of Peter.—**Thou mindest not the things of God, i. e.,** as represented by Christ, not regarding God's purpose in the foretold death.—**The things of men, i. e.,** he had carnal views, expected the temporal exaltation of the Messiah. Human nature is here represented as opposed to God, and under the influence of Satan.—A rebuke for all who have a sentimental admiration for Jesus of Nazareth, but stumble at the cross, which belongs to the things of God. The weakness of Peter re-appeared again and again, especially in the struggle of the papacy for temporal power and sovereignty.

Ver. 24. **Unto his disciples.** To others also whom He called about Him (Mark 8: 34; Luke 9: 23: 'to all').—**If any man would come after me.** A general statement, involving on this occasion the question: Will you follow me even to the death, which, I have assured you, must come? Unlike worldly leaders, Christ declares the darker side of His service; He asks for willing followers. A religion of *force* cannot be Christ's religion.—**Deny himself.** Let him renounce self as the object of supreme regard; this involves the relinquishment of all that interferes with the higher object.—**Take up his cross.** The person to be crucified bore his own cross; the death was a painful and shameful one. The reference is to readiness to *endure* for Christ, even death in its worst form. It includes of course all minor forms of endurance. Comp. Luke 9: 23, where 'daily' is added. Continuous cross-bearing is implied here.—**Follow me.** Here in the path of suffering, but also in the path of holiness and in the path to glory, as the following verses suggest.

25 self, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his ¹life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his ¹life for my sake shall find it.
 26 For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his ¹life? or what shall a
 27 man give in exchange for his ¹life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man
 28 according to his ²deeds. Verily, I say unto you,

¹ Or, soul.

² Gr. doing.

Ver. 25. **For whosoever would** ('willeth' or 'wisheth to') **save his life**, etc. Comp. the same thought in chap. 10: 39. Whoever makes the lower life the supreme motive shall lose the higher life, and whoever, making Christ supreme, shall lose even life for His sake, shall find it in the highest, truest sense. The contrast throughout the passage is not between body and soul, but earthly life in all forms with true heavenly life here and hereafter. Life worldly, selfish, fleshly, is opposed to life eternal, Christian and spiritual. 'The fear of death subjects to the bondage of death (Heb. 2: 15); while readiness to suffer a holy death for Christ's sake opens up before us true life.'

Ver. 26. **What shall a man be profited**. In view of this saving and losing.—**Forfeit his life**. Same word as in ver. 25. The variation in the common version is unfortunate. The Greek word (*psyche*) has the double meaning 'life' and 'soul.' But here 'life' in the higher sense is meant, not 'soul' in distinction from 'body.' It is implied that selfish gaining of the world involves the loss of true life, that such a gain is really only an apparent gain, while the loss is real and irreparable. The usual inferences, based on the sense 'soul' (E. V. 'lose his own soul'), are just as true if applied to 'life' in its higher sense (life *eternal*).

Ver. 27. **For**. The reason this transaction is so unprofitable is now given.—**The Son of man**, who now in humble form asks to be followed on the path of suffering.—**Shall come in the glory of his Father**. Through suffering to glory. He spoke first of His own sorrows, then of His people's; now He predicts glory and triumph; their's also, because His. In this second coming, afterwards more fully spoken of (chaps. 24 and 25), He shall appear as Judge of all, in the glory of God the Father, and the attendants shall be **his angels**. Both a threatening and a promise in view of the judgment which it involves.—**Unto every man according to his deeds**. His whole character and conduct. This depends upon the effort either to save the lower life or gain the higher. This 'doing' results from faith or unbelief.

Ver. 28. **Verily I say unto you**. Solemn preface.—**There are**

There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

CHAPTER 17: 1-13.

The Transfiguration.

17 1 AND after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them

some of them that stand here. The Twelve and the people about (Mark 8: 34).—**Who shall in no wise taste of death.** Death is represented under the figure of a bitter cup. Some of those present should be still alive when the event referred to in the next clause should take place, though they should afterwards die. Comp. 24: 34. Such words are a proof of the early date of the Gospel, before the destruction of Jerusalem. Not the 'coming' in ver 27. (1) That was 'in the glory of His Father,' this 'in His kingdom,' or a coming of the kingdom of God 'with power' (Mark 9: 1, comp. Luke 9: 27); (2) So definite a prediction of the final coming is inconsistent with chap. 24: 36: 'But of that day and hour knoweth no one,' etc. Nor is it the transfiguration, which was a temporary revelation, but the establishment of the new dispensation, which was the coming of the kingdom of God with power. The more precise reference may be (1) to the coming of our Lord after the resurrection; but all of them except Judas lived to see that, and it is implied that some would die; (2) to the day of Pentecost, but this is open to the same objection; (3) to the *destruction of Jerusalem*, which ended the old dispensation. Chap. 10: 23 refers to this, and chap. 25 supports the same view. That event was of awful significance. In view of the circumstances, the hostility of the Jews now manifest, the prediction that Jerusalem would be the place of His sufferings, the announcement of His Church as distinguished from the old economy to be abrogated fully in the ruin of that city, it seems clear that if one event be referred to, it is this, which was in so many respects 'a *type* and *earnest* of the final coming of Christ' (Alford). It was a judicial coming of the Lord which occurred in the life-time of some (A. D. 70), but not of all the disciples who listened to this prophecy. See ch. 24: 1-22.

The Transfiguration, vers. 1-13.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 9: 2-8; Luke 9: 28-36. After our Lord's prediction of His sufferings and hint of His glory (chap. 16: 21-28), three chosen disciples, the Rock-apostle, and the two Sons of Thunder, received a supernatural testimony and pledge of that glory: as they afterwards witnessed His deepest humiliation. But the primary purpose probably was to give to our Lord, at this crisis, consolation from His Father, who by an attesting voice ushered in the sufferings as He had done the

successes at baptism. The place of the Transfiguration, according to monastic tradition dating from the fourth century, was Mount Tabor, near Nazareth, in Galilee; but it was probably the southern slope of the lofty Mount Hermon near Cæsarea Philippi; as it occurred a few days after the confession of Peter made at that place. Christ would not so soon have gone to Tabor, passing through Capernaum, and then returned north to Capernaum to start south for Jerusalem (17: 24; Mark 9: 33). Mount Tabor was at that time inhabited on the top and a fortified camp; while the snow-capped Mount Hermon offered many retired spots, where our Lord and His disciples could meet their heavenly visitors without disturbance from any quarter. It is remarkable that the confession of Peter and the Transfiguration should have occurred on that border region between the Jews and the Gentiles, as if in anticipation of the triumph of the gospel in heathen lands. On Mt. Tabor (the Rigi) and Mt. Hermon (the Mont Blanc, of Palestine), and their relation to this event, see Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, pp. 330 sqq.

THE TRANSFIGURATION was no myth, no dream, but a real supernatural event, assigned to a particular time and place, seen by three disciples, reported by three Evangelists, alluded to directly by Peter (2 Pet. 1: 18), and indirectly by John (1: 14); mysterious, yet full of beauty and significance. An anticipation of Christ's future glory (John 12: 16, 23; 17: 8, 22-24). A manifestation of heaven on earth. A Sabbath revelation ('after six days'); an earnest of the resurrection, a prophecy of Sabbath rest in heaven.—Three witnesses, three accounts; the same human company in Gethsemane, but a different heavenly visitant.—Our Lord's inherent divine glory burst forth.—Moses and Elijah: the one had represented Christ's sufferings in type, the other in prophecy; the Old and New Testaments agree, and centre in the Cross; Christ is revealed as Lord of the invisible world, as well as of the future kingdom of glory.—Peter's proposal; an expression of fear and perplexity, and yet of gratitude for privilege; like privilege often produces like desire to rest before the time.—The dark cloud on Mount Sinai; the bright cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration.—The attesting voice, now a command to hear Him, as He went to death.—'Jesus only,' the last, the best, the all-sufficient.—The new covenant established on its own evidence, the Master's authority proclaimed as sufficient.—When Christ should come forth from the grave, the truth about Him could come out from secrecy (ver. 9). Elijah had appeared; the true fulfilment of prophecy was in the coming of John the Baptist; what was done to him a prelude of what the rulers of the Jews would do to Christ. Those who reject the preacher of repentance will soon crucify the preacher of salvation.—Raphael's picture of the Transfiguration, his last and his best: the Saviour soaring above the earth and floating in glory; Moses and Elijah bowing in adoration before Him; the disciples on the earth, overpowered by the dazzling light. One of the sublimest creations of genius, yet only a dim reflection of the reality. He also happily contrasted His heavenly glory with the earthly misery which was healed by the Saviour immediately afterwards (ver. 14 sqq.).

Ver. 1. After six days. Luke: 'about an eight days,' i. e., 'about a week' after Peter's confession.—**Peter, and James, and John his brother.** His companions in Gethsemane (chap. 26: 85; Mark 14: 37), Peter the leader, James the first to suffer martyrdom, and John the beloved disciple who lingered longest on earth.—**A high mountain apart.** The transfiguration probably took place in the

2 up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, 3 and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah

night. 1. Jesus had gone up into the mountain to pray (Luke 9: 28), which He usually did at night (Luke 6: 12; 21: 37; 22: 39; Matt. 14: 23, 24). 2. The Apostles were heavy with sleep. 3. They did not descend till the next day (Luke 9: 37). 4. The transfiguration itself could be seen to better advantage at night than in day-light. On Mount Hermon snow would be visible, adding a natural splendor to the scene.

Ver. 2. **And he was transfigured before them**, as witnesses. Peter afterwards mentions it (2 Pet. 1: 16-18), and John alludes to it (John 1: 14). The change in His appearance took place while He was praying (Luke 9: 29).—**His face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.** Mark has the graphic touch, no doubt from the lips of Peter: 'And his garments became glistening, exceeding white; so as no fuller on earth can whiten them.' Luke: 'The fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling.' No explanation is possible that denies the supernatural element. Our Lord's inherent glory burst forth; added to this there was an external heavenly illumination affecting His garments and surrounding Moses and Elijah, reaching its highest manifestation in the luminous cloud spoken of in ver. 5.—Lower analogies: the glory which shone in the face of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai, Ex. 34: 29; the face of Stephen, the proto-martyr, which was as radiant as 'the face of an angel' (Acts 6: 15). Lange: 'We know how the human countenance is often lit up by joy, beautified by affection, or wonderfully transformed by the peace and blessedness realized in the hour of death.'

Ver. 3. **And behold.** The second stage of the miraculous occurrence.—**There appeared unto them.** These persons were really present. It was not a vision, as is plain from the account of Luke.—**Moses and Elijah.** The two chief representatives of the law and the prophets. Both were forerunners of the Messiah, and had also fasted forty days. They came from the invisible world, appearing 'in glory' (Luke 9: 31), in a glorified form. They were recognized by the disciples, probably by intuition. They saw the whole history of Israel in miniature.—**Talking with him.** 'Of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem' (Luke). Even on the Mount of Transfiguration the Cross is in the foreground, and these Old Testament saints were probably then instructed in regard to it. The appearance of these two persons has been connected by some with the manner of their departure from earth. But this point cannot be pressed. Mark's account seems to give a certain prominence to Elijah ('Elijah with Moses').

4 talking with him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three ¹tabernacles; one for thee, 5 and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;

¹ Or, *booths*.

Ver. 4. **Lord, it is good for us to be here**, etc. Luke, 'not knowing what he saith,' to which Mark adds: 'for they became sore afraid.' He wished to remain there, and perhaps to detain Moses and Elijah, since they were about to depart (Luke 9: 38). The glory was so dazzling, the privilege seemed so great, the companionship so choice, that he would cling to the enjoyment, and let the toils and duties of the future go.—**I will make**. The other accounts (and the common reading here) have: 'let *us* make.' 'I' indicates ardent, self-confident feeling, characteristic of Peter.—**Three tabernacles**, or 'booths,' tents. Peter speaks of a 'tabernacle' (2 Pet. 1: 13, 14) just before referring to this event.—**One for thee**, etc. Lange: 'That form of anti-christian error which appeals to the authority of Peter has given rise to the erection of three tabernacles (Moses: the Greek Church; Elijah: the Roman Church; Christ: the Evangelical Church).' This analogy is not to be pressed. Peter, in his inconsiderateness, may have thought of inaugurating a new communion, with Christ for its centre, Moses its lawgiver, and Elijah its zealot, thus amalgamating *externally* the Old and New Testaments. The Crusaders, in the spirit of Peter in his dreamy state, built three churches on the top of Mt. Tabor, the ruins of which still remain in charge of the Franciscan monks. The Greeks have a rival monastery close by.

Ver. 5. **Behold, a bright cloud**. 'A sign from heaven' granted to the Apostles, though refused to the Jewish leaders. A luminous cloud, not dark, like that on Sinai. It was analogous to the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night in the wilderness, and to the Shekinah of the Old Testament; a *symbol* of the glory resting on the New Testament Church, separating between the holy and the unholy, and a *type* of the splendor of the New Jerusalem. Comp. 'in the clouds:' chap. 24: 30; Mark 13: 26; Luke 21: 27.—**Overshadowed them**, i. e., our Lord, Moses, and Elijah, since the voice came from 'out of the cloud.' A bright cloud could render them invisible as readily as a dark one.—**And behold, a voice**. The culmination. The 'visible presence' of God was followed by an 'audible presence,' giving a solemn attestation to the Messiah and Son of God, at a time when His rejection by the chosen people had begun, and His death been foretold to His disciples.—**This is my beloved Son**. The same words substantially as those heard at the baptism of our Saviour, chap. 3: 17, but here ad-

6 hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they
7 fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus
came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not
8 afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one,
save Jesus only.

9 And as they were coming down from the mountain,
Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no
man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead.
10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say

dressed to the disciples.—**Hear ye him.** Obey Him, as well as listen to Him. Hear *Him*, more than law or prophecy (Moses and Elijah). Their remaining carnal Messianic hopes were thus opposed.

Ver. 6. **And when the disciples heard it, etc.** Ver. 6, 7, peculiar to Matthew. The fear began when the cloud overshadowed the Lord and the two Old Testament saints (comp. Luke 9: 34), but culminated at this visible and audible manifestation of the Father's presence.

Ver. 7. **Came and touched them.** Comp. similar occurrences, Isa. 6: 5-8; Dan. 10: 9, 10; Rev. 1: 17.

Ver. 8. **Save Jesus only.** Without Moses and Elijah. The hour of glory was over, and the Lord now in His usual lowliness, resumed His intercourse with them, and returned to the labors of His ministry which were awaiting Him at the foot of the mount. The sufficiency of His authority is implied, in view of the command of ver. 5. Moments of spiritual ecstasy, like angels' visits, are few and far between, but Jesus is always with us in our common daily life and work.

Ver. 9. **As they were coming down.** This would require some time.—**Commanded them.** A special prohibition.—**Tell the vision to no man.** 'Vision' does not imply that the occurrence was a kind of dream, or like the visions seen by the prophets. The narrative itself forbids this: the only other accounts use the phrase: 'What things they had seen.'—**Until the Son of man be risen from the dead.** It was too soon to tell of it; even the three understood very little (Mark 9: 10). This injunction would also serve to impress the occurrence on their minds; discussion of it during the intervening period of persecution would occasion doubts or carnal expectation. Besides it involved new light concerning the state of the dead, which could not be received until the resurrection of Christ. The necessity for concealment then ceased.

Ver. 10. **Why then?** The connection with what precedes is, according to Alford: 'If this was not the coming of Elijah, *was he yet to come?* If it was, how was it so *secret* and so *short?*'

Ver. 11. **Elijah indeed cometh.** Our Lord confirms the view that Elijah should come (Mal. 4: 5).—**Shall restore** or 'establish

- 11 the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall re-
 12 store all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man
 13 also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

CHAPTER 17: 14-21.

The Possessed Epileptic Boy.

- 14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying, Lord,

anew,' all things. Comp. Mal. 4: 6. The actual work of restoration was, however, the work of the Messiah, for which Elijah should prepare the way (comp. Luke 3: 4: Acts 3: 21).

Ver. 12. **Elijah is come already.** Comp. chap. 11: 14. The prophecy of Malachi had been fulfilled in John the Baptist, so far as the first coming of the Messiah was concerned.—**They knew him not.** They recognized neither John the forerunner of the Messiah, nor the Messiah himself. Like persecution followed like unbelief.

Ver. 13. **He spake unto them of John the Baptist.** Our Lord referred to John, but this does not exhaust the meaning of the prophecy in Malachi. The passages bearing on the subject indicate strongly another appearance of Elijah (whether the same person or not is of course unknown to us) before the second coming of Christ, to do a similar preparatory work. In every great spiritual movement there must be one who, like John the Baptist, precedes 'in the spirit and power of Elijah.'

The Possessed Epileptic Boy. Vers. 14-21.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 9: 14-29; Luke 9: 37-42. All place this miracle immediately after the transfiguration (Luke: 'the next day'). This 'may be regarded as one of the evidences of the genuineness and authenticity of the narrative, and against the mythical hypothesis.' Meyer. Lesson: From the mount of transfiguration to the valley of misery; from the height of spiritual enjoyment to the performance of duty and the relief of distress.—The subject of this miracle had all the symptoms of epilepsy and was also possessed. The inability of the disciples to cure him, the questionings of the scribes (mentioned by Mark) and the faith of the father, all give additional interest to the occurrence. Thus the training of the Twelve, now the all-important matter, was carried on. The nine disciples in the valley had ventured without sufficient faith into a conflict with Satan and the scribes. The Master came to their aid, to enforce the needed lesson. The people, on whom the failure of the disciples had produced an effect,

15 have mercy on my son : for he is epileptic, and suffer-
 16 eth grievously : for oft-times he falleth into the fire,
 17 and oft-times into the water. And I brought him to
 18 thy disciples, and they could not cure him. And Jesus
 answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation,
 how long shall I be with you ? how long shall I bear
 with you ? bring him hither to me. And Jesus re-

now wondered again (Luke 9: 43), but the current of hostility was not checked. Mark gives the most detailed and vivid account, evidently from an eye-witness (Peter), and mentions the interesting dialogue of Jesus with the father (21-25), who, after his faith had been sufficiently tested, exclaimed, 'I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.'

Ver. 14. Kneeling to him. An act of homage, not necessarily of worship. The scribes were questioning with the disciples ; the multitude were amazed and ran to Him (Mark 9: 14-17). The failure of the disciples (ver. 16) had probably occasioned a denial of Christ's authority on the part of the scribes. Hence the agitation of the crowd.

Ver. 15. For he is epileptic. Lit. 'affected by the changes of the moon.' Comp. 4: 24. All the symptoms of his disease were those of epilepsy, accompanied by suspension of speech (Mark 9: 17, 18), and caused by demoniacal possession. When the evil spirit seized the lad, he foamed at the mouth, gnashed with his teeth, and pined away under the violence of the paroxysm. He was an only child (Luke 9: 38).

Ver. 16. Thy disciples. Including the nine Apostles.

Ver. 17. O faithless and perverse generation. The failure to cure, the catechizing of the scribes, and the effect produced on the people, proved that all present were unbelieving and liable to be led astray. But the term 'generation' requires a still wider reference to the race and generation whom this company represented.—**How long shall I be with you ?** An expression of displeasure and holy impatience. He would not long remain on earth and bear with their unbelief and perversity.—**To me,** emphasizing His power, despite the failure of the disciples. Mark (9: 20-25) narrates with life-like vivacity a fearful paroxysm in the lad when brought to Jesus ; a description of his case from the father, with a new entreaty ; the challenge given by our Lord to his faith, and his humble, tearful answer ; the movement of the crowd excited by the previous failure and controversy ; the language addressed to the evil spirit.

Ver. 18. And the demon went out from him. Mark describes the process. The lad lay as is usual after a very severe epileptic fit. But an entire cure followed. The multitude marvelled (Luke 9: 43), but probably did not believe.

buked him; and the ¹devil went out from him: and
 19 the boy was cured from that hour. Then came the
 disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we
 20 cast it out? And he saith unto them, Because of your
 little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have
 faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this
 mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it
 shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.²

CHAPTER 17: 22-27.

The Second Prediction of our Lord's Sufferings.

22 And while they ³abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto

¹ Gr. demon. ² Many authorities, some ancient, insert ver. 21 *But this kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting.* See Mark ix. 29.

³ Some ancient authorities read *were gathering themselves together.*

Ver. 19. **To Jesus apart.** In a 'house' (Mark 9: 28).

Ver. 20. **Because of your little faith.** A general answer, the specific one is recorded by Mark (and in ver. 21, which is to be omitted). The attempt showed some faith, the failure 'little faith.' The revelation of our Lord's death may have caused despondency and doubt.—**As a grain of mustard seed.** Small, yet living (chap. 13: 33), and capable of rapid increase, while their faith had decreased.—**Ye shall say unto this mountain.** Probably pointing to the lofty Mt. Hermon in sight. Comp. chap. 21: 21; 1 Cor. 13: 2. A figurative expression for power to remove the most formidable obstacles. Rabbis who could clear away great difficulties were called 'rooters up of mountains.' That promise is misunderstood only when power over material things is deemed greater than spiritual power.—**Nothing shall be impossible unto you.** The statement is limited by the preceding part of the verse. Comp. chap. 21: 22. Faith, the greatest spiritual conqueror. Its wonderful power exemplified in the lives of the Old Testament heroes (the cloud of witnesses, Heb. ch. 11), the Apostles (especially Paul), the martyrs and saints of all ages. See Archdeacon Hare's sermons on *The Victory of Faith*, especially the last.

Ver. 21. This verse of the Old Version, which the Revision puts on the margin, is omitted by the two oldest manuscripts, the best of the later ones (cursives), some very ancient versions; and there are other reasons for doubting its genuineness. If retained: 'Howbeit' should be changed to 'but.' See notes on Mark 9: 29, where the passage is to be retained.

Second Prediction of our Lord's Sufferings, vers. 22, 23; the Temple Tribute, vers. 24-27.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 17: 22, 23; Luke 9: 43-45. The definite de-

them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the
 23 hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third
 day he shall be raised up. And they were exceeding
 sorry.

The Temple Tribute, vers. 24-27.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that
 received the ¹half-shekel came to Peter, and said,
 25 Doth not your ²master pay the ¹half-shekel? He

¹ Gr. *didrachma*.

² Or, *teacher*.

tails as to time and place show that our Lord repeated His prediction of His sufferings (chap. 16: 21-23). Our Lord now left the foot of the mount and passed through Galilee (Mark 9: 30); the prediction was made while the people were still wondering (Luke 9: 43). We infer that they passed directly from Mount Hermon into Galilee; on the way our Lord made this declaration; reaching Capernaum, the question about tribute was put. Both incidents belong together in the education of the Apostles for the events which were so soon to come. This was the last visit to Galilee, the last miracle there. It is unlikely that a visit to Jerusalem (at the Feast of Tabernacles, (John 7: 2-14) intervened. The section on the Temple Tribute is peculiar to Matthew.

Ver. 22. Delivered up, etc. The Son of God would be left to the power of men; a new feature in the prediction.

Ver. 23. They were exceeding sorry. No remonstrance now, but sorrow, partly from natural affection, partly from the dashing of their false hopes. The strife as to who should be greatest, which followed (chap. 18: 1), shows that their views were still incorrect; Mark and Luke speak of their failure to understand. Men are still slow to learn the meaning of the death and resurrection of our Lord.

Ver. 24. Capernaum. The Lord's usual residence; hence the place where the temple-tax would be collected from Him.—**They that received the half shekel**, Gr. *didrachma*, two Attic drachmas, equivalent to a Jewish half shekel. It was the annual tribute which every male Jew above twenty years of age paid (in addition to the tithes) for the support of the Temple. Not a Roman tax, although changed into this after the destruction of Jerusalem. The receivers were not publicans, but those acting for the Jewish authorities. The value of a shekel is variously estimated from 50 to 70 cents (2s. 3d. to 3s.).—**Doth not your master pay?** They expected an affirmative answer. The temple-tax was obligatory; see Exod. 30: 18 sqq. (comp. 2 Chron. 24: 5, 6). Josephus implies the same obligation (*Ant.* XVIII. 9, 1). It was collected at the end of the ecclesiastical year in the early part of March.

Ver. 25. Peter's Yea was hasty; he was zealous for his Master's

saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? 26 And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto 27 him, Therefore the sons are free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a 'shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

¹ Gr. *stater*.

honor, but unmindful of His dignity and prerogative as the Lord of the Temple.—**Jesus spake first to him**, anticipated his statement by superhuman knowledge of what had occurred.—**Toll or tribute**. Duties or taxes.—**From their sons, or from strangers**, i. e., those not of their household.

Ver. 26. **Therefore the sons are free**. Peter had lately confessed that Jesus was 'the Son of the living God;' and yet now so readily admits the obligation to pay the temple-tax. The real Temple need not pay tribute to that which foreshadowed it. The saying does not refer to taxes to the State (see chap. 22: 19), nor imply that the clergy should be exempt from taxation. Christians are free, not from the duties of citizens, but from the yoke of legality the priesthood would put upon them. (In Latin the intimate connection between sonship and freedom can be expressed thus: *Liberi sunt liberi*.) The plural 'sons' is necessitated by the figure of 'the kings of the earth,' and does not interfere with Christ's unique Sonship, but rather establishes it by analogy, as there is but one King in heaven.

Ver. 27. **But lest we cause them to stumble**. 'Them' refers to the tax gatherers and others who might infer that Christ was opposed to the Temple. The time was not ripe for asserting this freedom; our Lord was still 'under the law' for us.—**Thou shalt find a shekel**, Gr. a 'stater,' a silver coin equal to four drachmas, the exact amount needed for two persons. To explain this as meaning the value of the fish for which it was to be sold, is frivolous; no single fish thus caught had such a value. The piece of money was in the mouth of the fish. Our Lord here exhibits miraculous power, in drawing by the force of His will this fish to that place at that time, as well as foreknowledge of the event. The two coincide in Divine operations. This miracle was not a freak of power, but had a definite and proper motive; the money was provided in a way that asserted Christ's dignity to Peter, and yet gave no offense. The fisherman must resume his old occupation to discharge the debt he had so readily

CHAPTER 18: 1-14.

Discourse respecting the Greater in the Kingdom of Heaven.

18: 1 IN that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is ¹greatest in the kingdom of

¹ Gr. *greater*.

acknowledged. Our Lord's position, not his poverty, called for this provision.—**For me and thee.** Not 'for us.' A distinction kept up throughout the Gospels (comp. John 20: 17). Our Lord's humility and glory both appear here. It is not stated that the miracle actually occurred; but it is implied in the command and promise of the Lord. Lange infers from the omission that the object of Matthew was to record the spiritual import, rather than the outward circumstances of the miracle.

Discourse respecting the Greater in the Kingdom of Heaven, vers. 1-14.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 9: 33-37; Luke 9: 46-48. The kingdom of heaven and little children. A lesson in humility. The whole chapter forms one discourse, delivered upon one occasion, after the return to Capernaum, probably immediately succeeding the miracle just mentioned. Two distinct topics are spoken of: the *first*, the nature of true greatness (vers. 1-14), called forth by the question of the disciples (ver. 1); the *second*, Christian discipline and forgiveness. The latter points to the founding of the Christian Church, distinct from the Jewish theocracy. The question of the disciples may have recognized this purpose of the Master (so plainly indicated in chaps. 16, 17), and not have been entirely owing to carnal views of the kingdom of heaven. But at all events they needed to learn what was necessary to enter that kingdom, before they could understand who would be the greatest in it. The disciples had not understood our Lord's previous saying (chap. 16: 18) in the Romish sense as conferring any primacy upon Peter and his successor. The Lord's promise to Peter and the choice of the three disciples as witnesses of the Transfiguration may have given rise to this rivalry and jealousy. But Christ solemnly protests, and makes little children a constant and living condemnation of all spiritual and ecclesiastical pretensions.

Ver. 1. **In that hour.** As Peter returned from paying the temple tax, to his own house. According to Mark (9: 33), our Lord first asked them about their dispute on this subject 'in the way,' probably to Capernaum. Hence the declaration: 'surely then the sons are free' (chap. 17: 26), could not have occasioned this discourse.—**Who then, etc.** 'Then' hints at a previous discussion.—**Greatest.** Lit., 'greater.' A question of priority, not primacy. This gives room for a more general discussion.

- 2 heaven? And he called to him a little child, and set
 3 him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto
 you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye
 shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.
 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little
 child, the same is the ¹greatest in the kingdom of

¹ Gr. *greater*.

Ver. 2. **A little child**, probably a little boy. An untrustworthy tradition of the Greek Church says it was the martyr Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who called himself 'Theophoros,' but in the active sense, 'one who carried God within him' (θεοφόρος), not in the passive, 'one who was carried by God' (θεόφορος). Plumptre conjectures that it was a son of Peter; but then the text would have said so. The point is that it was 'a little child,' free from every taint of egotism and jealousy. Christ's treatment of children and women is one of the proofs of His divinity.—**Set him in the midst of them.** He took the child in His arms (Mark). The whole transaction would of itself show the child's submission and trustfulness.

Ver. 3. **Except ye turn.** As the context shows, return from this path of ambition to childlike *humility*; not implying that they had never been converted. Regeneration (like natural birth) cannot be repeated; but conversion, or repentance, which is the act of man, should follow every fall. The wider application is to the absolute necessity of conversion (turning ourselves to God) in entering the kingdom of heaven. The necessity of regeneration, of which true conversion is a manifestation, is declared in John 3: 5.—**And become as little children.** In what respect is shown in ver. 4.—**Ye shall in no wise enter.** 'Instead of discussing who shall be greater, you need to inquire whether you have entered it.' This is not denied; but the ambitious question, opposed to the humility which is essential, should raise a doubt. 'Even the chief of the Apostles was self-excluded when he gloried in his primacy' (Plumptre).

Ver. 4. **Humble himself as this little child.** Not humble himself as this little child has done, but become humble as this little child is in this company. The child is unconscious of humility. There is a pride which apes humility, and turns this virtue into hypocrisy. The absolute innocence of children is not implied, but simply this: 'The real greatness of the child consists in its perfect contentment with its littleness and dependence.' This is necessary for entrance to the kingdom; our greatness there is measured by our humility. 'He who is most Christ-like in humility, Phil. 2: 7, 8, shall be most like Christ in glory' (Carr). The answer virtually forbids the putting of such a question, and is then expanded into a discourse about 'the dignity of Christ's little ones.'

5 heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child
6 in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one
of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it
is profitable for him that ¹a great mill-stone should
be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk

¹ Gr. a mill-stone turned by an ass.

Ver. 5. **And whoso shall receive one such little child.** The consequence and evidence of humility; still more prominent in the other accounts. The primary reference is to children in years; but the context (comp. vers. 6, 9) extends it to children in spirit. The general application is to those apparently small, those needing and receiving instruction, forbidding pride and a hierarchical spirit on the part of Christ's disciples. 'Shall receive,' i. e., into spiritual fellowship. This implies that little children can be Christians and members of Christ's Church.—**In my name**, i. e., on the ground of my name; referring either to those who receive, or to those who were received, probably to both.—**Receiveth me**, since the 'little one' represents Christ. Mark and Luke insert here a remark of John, about one who cast out devils in Christ's name, without following with them. The hierarchical spirit manifested in forbidding him was rebuked in part by what follows. John Charlier Gerson (d. 1429), the Chancellor of the University of Paris, retired at last to a convent at Lyons, and found his greatest delight in the instruction of little children: greater in this humble office than as leader of the reformatory Council of Pisa and Constance which burnt John Huss (1415).

Ver. 6. **Cause to stumble.** By pride, to cause others to fall into unbelief (the opposite of 'receiving'); not a mere wounding of over-sensitive feelings, or offending a morbid and incorrect sense of right. Such an application would destroy all right as well as all hope. A warning in regard to our treatment of humble Christians, especially of Christian children.—**One of these little ones who believe on me.** The weak, unpretending, outwardly insignificant, the children, the poor, the ignorant, and the weak-minded are all included. Only he who feeds the lambs can feed the sheep (John 21: 15).—**It is profitable for him that** (to this end). This would be the purpose subserved by such conduct. Comp. John 11: 50. The old version: 'it were better for him,' is more idiomatic, but less faithful.—**A great mill-stone.** The large stone used in a mill driven by asses, as distinguished from a small hand-mill worked by women (24: 4).—**He should be sunk in the depth of the sea.** Capital punishment by drowning with a heavy weight around the neck was common among the Greeks, Romans, Syrians and Phœnicians, but very rare among the Jews. (Josephus mentions one example that the revolting Galilæans drowned the partisans of Herod, *Ant.* XIV. 15, 10). Hence all the more forcible here.—The profit of dominating over the con-

7 in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through
 8 whom the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to
 9 be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the ¹hell of fire.
 10 See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I

¹ Gr. *Gehenna of fire*.

science is a burden about the neck of the offender which involves his destruction. A warning both to individual and ecclesiastical bodies. The principle proved true in the case of the Jewish hierarchy.

Ver. 7. **Woe unto the world**, etc. False disciples, causing Christ's humble followers to stumble, laying burdens on the conscience, cause sin, bring woe on the world.—**For it must needs be**, in view of the existence of sin.—**But woe to that man**. If the world receives woe from the offences, much more he who causes them. There is an inevitable connection between guilt and judgment. A reference to Judas is possible; but the general application is obvious: whatever the necessity of offences from the actual state of things in the world, and from the permissive plan of God, the offenders are responsible, and shall be punished.

Ver. 8. **And if thy hand**, etc. The connection is: In view of this woe, remove all causes of offence in thyself! Comp. chap. 5: 29, 30. Here the reference is more general, namely, to whatever in us, however dear or necessary, which would lead us astray and sever our fellowship with Christ. Special application (not to be pressed): the 'hand' denotes aptitude for *government*; the 'foot,' for *exertion*; the 'eye,' for *knowledge*, all in *ecclesiastical* matters. The context suggests that all these members (representing talents, etc.) should be used, not for purposes of pride, but to the edification of the little ones.

Ver. 9. **The hell ('Gehenna') of fire**. The only variation between this verse and the last, and a suggestive one (comp. the more detailed form in Mark 9: 43-48). Certain and awful future punishment is threatened in cases where some darling sin (or cause of sin) is preferred to Christ.

Ver. 10. **These little ones**. A direct address to the disciples in view of their question: Who shall be the greater? 'Little ones,' not Christians in general, nor even truly humble Christians, but rather weak, growing Christians, including children, who may and ought to

- say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.¹
- 12 How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek
- 13 that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, insert here ver. 11 *For the Son of man came to save that which was lost.* See Luke 19: 10.

be Christians.—**Their angels in heaven.** They are not to be despised, since they enjoy angelic guardianship. Both the words and form are against the explanation: 'their spirits after death.' A distinct recognition of the belief in guardian angels; comp. Dan. 10: 13, 20; Ps. 34: 7; 91: 11; Heb. 1: 14; Acts 12: 7. (The Old and New Version reverse the order of the Greek text, and lead to the misunderstanding that 'in heaven' belongs to the verb 'behold.')—**Do always behold.** The general sense is: God's *highest* angels represent the *least* subjects of His kingdom. Lange: 'Christ Himself, as the Great Advocate and Intercessor, is the central point of their angelic guardianship.' Stier: 'Here is Jacob's ladder: beneath are the little ones; then their angels; then the Son of God; and above Him again (ver. 14) the Father Himself, and His good pleasure.'

Ver. 11. This verse (in the margin) is omitted in the most ancient manuscripts, and was probably inserted from Luke 19: 10. It seemed apt at this point, both in view of what follows, and as a reason for the admonition in ver. 10, presenting Christ's conduct in contrast to this 'despising.' He came to save those altogether lost; but such contempt repels those who are apparently on the path of salvation.

Ver. 12. **How think ye?** This parable (with a similar one) was spoken on a later occasion to a different audience (Luke 15: 4-7). Here it is a lesson for the disciples (the under-shepherds), showing them their duty: there it is a rebuke for the Pharisees, who objected to this seeking and saving on the part of the Good Shepherd. 'The ministry of the Gospel not priestly domination, but pastoral service' (Lange).

Ver. 13. **The ninety and nine which have not gone astray.** Either the unfallen beings in other worlds, whom Christ in a certain sense left, to save the 'one' in this lost world, or those who think they are not lost, and who cannot be saved as long as they think so. The former meaning seems more appropriate here, the latter in Luke. The general lesson is: The Good Shepherd's special care was for those in greatest need, so should yours be; even if the needy be but the smallest fraction of those committed to your care.

14 astray. Even so it is not ¹the will of ²your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

CHAPTER 18: 15-35.

Discipline and Forgiveness in the Christian Communion; the Parable of the Forgiven but Unforgiving Servant.

15 And if thy brother sin ³against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee,

¹ Gr. *a thing willed before your Father.*

² Some ancient authorities read *my*.

³ Some ancient authorities omit *against thee*.

Ver. 14. **The will of your Father.** In ver. 10 where the dignity of the little ones is asserted, our Lord says 'my Father;' here where the duty is enforced by God's gracious will, 'your Father.'—**One of these little ones**, as above, weak, humble, believers: God will not that a single one of them perish, reach the final state of the lost. 'Little ones' cannot refer to all mankind; here, as throughout, it includes children. It warrants the belief that children, dying in childhood, are *all saved*. God's 'will' cannot be defeated. The parable shows that it cannot be on the ground of their innocence, but because the Son of man came to save them. As a child is trustful, going to the arms opened to receive it, so we may well believe that at death that trustfulness places it in the arms of Jesus, who saves it, its infantile trustfulness expanding under the impulse of a higher state of existence, into a living faith, no less real and justifying than that of adults.

Discipline and Forgiveness in the Christian Communion; the Parable of the Forgiven but Unforgiving Servant, vers. 15-35.

CONTENTS. Vers. 1-14 forbade offences *against* the humble. This section teaches how the humble should deal with offences: (1.) as regards the Christian assembly (vers. 15-20); (2.) as regards his own spirit (vers. 21-35). Our Lord seems to say: you have taken 'the keys' into your hands too soon, and used them improperly (see Mark 9: 38, 39; Luke 9: 49, 50). After the caution, however, came the renewed declaration of authority (ver. 18); Peter asked a question (ver. 21) which showed his fuller apprehension of the Christian rule of forgiveness, and called forth clearer instruction. The closing parable (vers. 23-35) contains truth, the easiest to *perceive*, the hardest to *receive*, of any practical lesson in the New Testament; it is based on God's full and free forgiveness.

Ver. 15. **And if thy brother.** A Christian brother.—**Sin.** The omission of 'against thee' in some ancient authorities would extend the precept. The passage, however, does not extend the power of the Church over all sins (since the rebuke against a hierarchical spirit for-

- 16 thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear *thee* not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.
- 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the ¹church; and if he refuse to hear the ¹church also, let him be
- 18 unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I

¹ Or, *congregation*.

bids this), nor warrant meddlesome interference and rebuke. Our disapproval does not prove that the 'brother' has sinned. The first step is to be in private.—**Shew**, not simply 'tell,' but convince him of his fault.—**Between thee and him alone**. Privacy is for his sake, and as a fact this rebuke is the more difficult one.—**Thou hast gained thy brother**. Regained him for God, by inducing repentance: regained him for thyself, by regaining his love and fellowship, which is disturbed by his sin whether an offence against the reprover or not. Proclaiming his fault is dangerous for him, encouraging him in his sins; and for us, fostering our worst passions.

Ver. 16. The next step is less private, but intended to prevent publicity.—**One or two more as witnesses**. The offence must be grave enough to warrant this step.—**Or three**, parenthetical, implying that the offending party may be witness against himself.—**Established**. It is assumed, not that both are in the wrong, but that the two witnesses, on hearing the facts, pronounce against the party to whom they go.

Ver. 17. **If he refuse to hear them**. Does not acknowledge his wrong under their influence,—The public step follows: **Tell it unto the church**, i. e., the particular Christian congregation. The word is here used in the local sense (corresponding to synagogue). It occurs only twice in the Gospels; the other time (ch. 16: 18) in the general or catholic sense. Every Christian congregation, like every Jewish synagogue, is a court with powers of discipline and excommunication.—**If he refuse to hear the church also**. The admonition and entreaty of the church is to be used as a means of *regaining* the brother.—**Let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican**, ('taxgatherer,' see notes on 5: 46 and 9: 11), i. e., as outside the Christian fellowship, though in a Christian, not a Jewish spirit. A man of high spirituality would be won by the first step, a lukewarm Christian by the second or third; when all fail, it is not distinctly commanded that the church should pronounce him *no* Christian. His character has proved itself so far unchristian that the person injured cannot have fellowship with him. The next verse, however, hints at formal acts of discipline on the part of the Church.

Ver. 18. **What things soever ye shall bind**, etc. What was said to Peter (chap. 16: 19) is here addressed to the Twelve, with the solemn introduction: 'Verily I say unto you.' A general application,

- say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
- 19 Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.
- 21 Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?
- 22 until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not

to the organized Church, is possible, but qualified by vers. 19, 20. An unlimited application has led to the greatest errors and crimes, and we may interpret Christ's spoken words by God's Providence. This verse then, in its full meaning, refers to the special power and wisdom given to the Apostles by means of which their foundation work 'on earth' corresponded to God's designs 'in heaven.' Vers. 19, 20, show the means by which the power of the Church may rise toward this Apostolic height. Where these conditions (agreement in prayer, and the presence of Christ) are wanting, the promise of this verse is invalid. Church authority depends on Christ's presence and power. The Jewish hierarchy forfeited its authority by its apostasy. The same thing occurred again in the abuse of the papacy.

Ver. 19. **If two of you.** 'Two' could still constitute a fellowship. —**Shall agree on earth.** This agreement could only be wrought by the Holy Spirit, selfish ends being excluded from the nature of the case. An encouragement to united prayer.

Ver. 20. **For.** The ground of the promised answer is not human agreement, but the presence of Christ. —**Where two or three.** The order gives an intimation of increase. —**In my name, i. e.,** as a Christian community, or church, although the application to Christian assemblies is a natural consequence. —**There am I in the midst of them.** Agreement in prayer had the promise of an answer; unity in the name of Jesus that of Christ's presence. The marks of a true Church: not size, success, nor succession, but an inward life of prayer and an outward life of confession ('in my name'). When ecclesiasticism abuses the authority indicated in vers. 17, 18, the two or three (agreeing in prayer and conscious of the presence of Christ) are assured that they are still Christ's people. This passage, despite the abuse of it, remains a justification of Protestantism. Where Christ is there is the church. Rome says: Where the pope is there is the church.

Ver. 21. **Then came Peter, etc.** The question was a moral fruit of the previous discourse. —**How oft.** The Rabbins said, three times; Peter increased the number to the sacred one of seven.

unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until ¹seventy
 23 times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven
 likened unto a certain king, which would make a
 24 reckoning with his ²servants. And when he had
 begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which
 25 owed him ten thousand ³talents. But forasmuch as
 he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him
 to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he
 26 had, and payment to be made. The ⁴servant there-
 fore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have
 27 patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the

¹ Or, *seventy times and seven*.³ This talent was probably worth about £240.² Gr. *bondservants*.⁴ Gr. *bondservant*.

Ver. 22. **Until seventy times seven.** It is doubtful whether the original means 490 or 77 (as in Gen. 4: 24 Sept.). But in either case it is a symbolical expression for never-ending forgiveness. Love is not to be limited by the multiplication table. God's forgiveness to man is unlimited; so should be man's forgiveness to man.

Ver. 23. **Therefore.** Because this readiness of forgiveness is the Christian principle.—**A certain king.** Perhaps in antithesis to the heavenly king; what is true of the former is much more true of the latter.—**Would, 'desired to,' make a reckoning with his servants,** represented as stewards over his property, or collectors of his revenues. An Oriental despot farms out his revenues among satraps, or governors of provinces. The special application is to those enjoying high trusts in the Church. The final reckoning will be at the final judgment, but there is also a continual reckoning which God's justice makes respecting the conduct of men.

Ver. 24. **But when he had begun.** With one foremost among the servants.—**Ten thousand talents**—£2,437,500, or \$12,187,500, if we understand Attic talents of silver. Talents of gold would, of course, be of much greater value. It signifies an enormous debt which no man could discharge, though he might incur it. The debt we owe to God is ever accumulating by sins of omission and commission.

Ver. 25. **To be sold, etc.** The Mosaic law permitted something of this kind (Exod. 22: 3; Lev. 25: 39; 2 Kings 4: 1). But verse 34 favors a reference to the severer customs of Oriental despots.—**And payment to be made.** As far as possible, however insufficient. In the ordinary course of God's dealings, strict justice is not only insisted upon, but begins its work.

Ver. 26. **I will pay thee all.** In fear and terror he makes a promise he could not fulfil. The special application is to one convicted of sin and fearing God's wrath, promising a self-righteous obedience, which he hopes will in some way be a payment in full.

lord of that ¹servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the ²debt. But that ¹servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him a hundred ³pence: and he laid hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was due. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto

¹ Gr. *bondservant*. ² Gr. *loan*. ³ The word in the Greek denotes a coin worth about eight pence half-penny. [Am. Com., *shillings*.]

Ver. 27. **Forgave him the debt.** It was the Lord's money entrusted to him, not an ordinary debt. The mercy in its greatness, fullness, and freeness, is the single point; the ground of it is not stated.

Ver. 28. **An hundred pence**, better, 'shillings' (Gr. *denaries*) = about \$16. A denarius is a silver coin worth about 16 cents, being a day's wages for a laborer. A considerable sum for that time, but very small compared with the other. The transgressions of our fellow-men against us, though many and grievous, are trifling in comparison to our sins against God.—**Took him by the throat.** Allowed by the Roman law. An unforgiving spirit is quick to apply the harshest legal measures.—**Pay what thou owest.** His own debt fully forgiven, yet he insists: He who owes must pay! The payment of 'a just debt' is demanded; the worst crimes have been committed under plea of 'justice.' That the servant 'went out' may be significant, since it is true that when we 'go out' from, forsake the presence of, our forgiving Lord, we become unforgiving. Only when near Him are we like Him.

Ver. 29. **Fell down and besought him.** As he had done his greater creditor.—**I will pay thee.** The best authorities omit 'all.' This may hint that we are far more ready to promise God (ver. 26) than men, all we owe, though the first promise cannot be fulfilled.

Ver. 30. **And he would not**, etc. Entreaty did not move him—his idea of justice must be carried out. Bitter controversy, unforgiving acts of discipline, are defended with 'justice' as the plea.—**Cast him into prison**, and thus cut him off from opportunity of gaining money for the payment of the debt. Suicidal vindictiveness. Patience and forbearance would have encouraged and enabled the debtor to make restitution.

Ver. 31. **So when his fellow-servants**, etc. Not a warrant

32 their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked ¹servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest
 33 me: shouldst not thou also have had mercy on thy
 34 fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the torment-
 35 ors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

CHAPTER 19: 1-12.

Discourse about Divorce, in Reply to the Pharisees.

19: 1 And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the

¹ Gr. *bondservant*.

for complaints to God against the unforgiving. The fellow-servants were **exceeding sorry**, not 'angry;' the sorrowful cries of God's people in a world of persecution and oppression are heard.

Ver. 33. **Shouldst not thou?** The duty of forgiveness is obvious, yet so imperfectly performed.

Ver. 34. **To the tormentors.** Not simply 'jailers,' but those who (among the ancient Romans) sought by legal tortures to find out whether the debtor had any concealed hoard. It adds the thought of actual punishment.—**Till he should pay.** This condition 'is the strongest possible way of expressing the eternal duration of his punishment' (Trench). The debt incurred by sin cannot decrease, but increases even in a state of punishment; the original debt, according to the parable, is so great that no human being can discharge it. The passage opposes both the doctrine of purgatory and that of the final restoration of unbelievers.

Ver. 35. **So shall also**, etc. It is an overstraining of the parable to infer that God revokes His pardon. The character of the servant is not that of one actually forgiven, since with pardon from God power from God is inseparably joined. Where the moral conditions of a Christian *life* fail, the man who fancies he has been pardoned is actually more guilty than before. Yet the warning is one needed and efficient in practical Christianity. The parable best illustrates the petition in the Lord's Prayer: 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive (or, have forgiven) our debtors.'

Discourse about Divorce, in Reply to the Pharisees. Chap. 19: 1-12.

CHRONOLOGY.—Comp. Mark 10: 1-12; Luke 16: 18. Shortly after the discourse recorded in chap. 18 our Lord finally left Galilee for Jerusalem. This chapter takes up

² borders of Judæa beyond Jordan; and great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

³ And there came unto him ¹Pharisees, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful *for a man* to put away

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, insert *the*.

the history after an interval, omitting a number of events recorded by Luke and John. Intervening occurrences (Robinson): the sending out of the Seventy (Luke 10: 1-16); the final departure from Galilee, passing through Samaria (Luke 9: 51-56; John 7: 2-10); the healing of the ten lepers (Luke 17: 11-19); the public teachings of Jesus at the feast of Tabernacles (John 7: 11-53); the account of the woman taken in adultery (John 8: 1); the reproof of the unbelieving Jews and the escape from their hands (John 8: 12-59); the instruction of the lawyer, and the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10: 28-37); the incidents in the house of Martha and Mary (Luke 10: 38-42); the return of the Seventy (Lu. 10: 17-24), which should probably be placed earlier; then in regular order the events narrated in John 9-11; 'Ephraim' (John 11: 54) being in Peræa, and this chapter taking up the history at that point.

Ver. 1. The borders of Judæa, beyond (the) Jordan, i. e., on the east side, called Peræa ('the land beyond') by the Roman conquerors. This was part of the territory of Herod Antipas, and extended from the Arnon on the south to Pella on the north; or from the head of the Dead Sea to a point nearly opposite the boundary between Samaria and Galilee. The Christians of Jerusalem sought refuge in Peræa (in Pella) just before the destruction of that city.

Ver. 2. Great multitudes. Friends and foes. Comp. Mark 10: 1: 'And multitudes come together unto him again, and, as he was wont, he taught them again.' Men always in need, Christ always giving, teaching and healing. The harmonists insert here the record of Luke, chap. 18: 22-18: 1-14; consisting mainly of parables appropriate to the advanced stage of our Lord's ministry. This assumes that He was already on the way towards Jerusalem when the Pharisees came.

Ver. 3. Came unto him Pharisees. Even in remote Peræa, almost the only remaining field of labor, Christ's opposers sought Him.—**Is it lawful, etc.** A matter of dispute between the rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai, turning on the interpretation of Deut. 24: 1 sq., especially the meaning of the word 'uncleanness,' which is there mentioned as a justifiable ground of divorce. Herod Antipas, in whose dominion Christ now was, had imprisoned John the Baptist for too free utterance on this point.—**For every cause.** The school of Hillel held that almost any charge or displeasure on the part of a husband would justify divorce. Josephus, the Jewish historian, divorced two wives on trivial grounds. The school of Shammai was more strict, but for this very reason was popular. The Pharisees wished not only to entangle Him in their party disputes, but also to place Him in opposition to the law of Moses (ver. 7). An affirmative answer would probably have called forth the charge of lax morality.

4 his wife for every cause? And he answered and said,
 Have ye not read, that he which ¹made *them* from the
 5 beginning made them male and female, and said, For
 this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and
 shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become
 6 one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one
 flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let
 7 not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then

¹ Some ancient authorities read *created*.

Ver. 4. **Have ye not read, etc.** An implied rebuke for their misunderstanding of the Scripture teaching on this point. Christ never mixes Himself up with the rabbinical quarrels, but goes directly to the Word of God, and to the primitive law which has outlived the law of Moses.—**He who made them**, etc. The historical truth of the narrative in Genesis chs. 1 and 2, is assumed as the basis of an important argument. The *creation* of man is affirmed.—**Male and female** (Gen. 1: 27). The question of the Pharisees is answered by what God *did*, in the original creation of man, instituting the sexual relation, and marriage as an indissoluble union between one man and one woman. This is the ideal and normal condition. Polygamy and divorce came in consequence of the fall, were tolerated and restricted in the Mosaic dispensation, but condemned by the gospel. The same applies to slavery and concubinage.

Ver. 5. **And said** (Gen. 2: 24). Either said by Adam before the fall, and here cited as said by God through Adam as the representative of the race, or by Moses, and cited as an inspired utterance.—**For this cause**. Comp. Eph. 5: 31, where the passage is applied also to Christ and the Church. God says, Christ says, that the relationship between a man and his wife is closer, higher, and stronger, than even that between children and parents. Notice: it is the man, who leaves his parents.—**The twain shall become one flesh**. 'Unity of soul and spirit,' is not mentioned. The absence of it, however great a source of unhappiness, is not a ground of divorce. The essential bond is the fact that the twain, by marriage, 'became one flesh,' one man within the limits of their united life in the flesh, for this world. The one cause of divorce (ver. 9) is incompatible with the unity as 'one flesh.'

Ver. 6. **What therefore God hath joined together, etc.** Our Lord's conclusion. The sentence forms a proper part of every Christian marriage ceremony. It is Christ's protection of this holy relation. It also implies a warning against hasty marriages, against ignorance and forgetfulness of the fact that it is *God* who forms the indissoluble tie.

Ver. 7. **Why then did Moses command?** Deut. 24: 1-4

did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and 8 to put *her* away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: 9 but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife,¹ except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:² and he that marrieth her when she is

¹ Some ancient authorities read *saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress*: as in ch. 5: 32. ² The following words, to the end of the verse, are omitted by some ancient authorities.

(comp. chap. 5: 31. The Pharisees try to involve Him in contradiction to the law of Moses by representing a mere permission into a command of divorce. Mark (10: 3) represents the *Lord* as asking: 'What did Moses command you?' But this is probably an abbreviated statement. Mark omits also the qualifying clause, 'except for fornication' (ver. 9), which is certainly genuine.

Ver. 8. **Suffered you.** Not 'commanded.' The Mosaic regulations were merely permissive, growing out of their sinfulness, especially their disposition to be harsh toward their wives. The law chose the least of two evils. The state may be still forced to concessive legislation; but the church ought to conform to the law of Christ and the highest standard of morality.—**But from the beginning it hath not been so.** In the original state in Paradise. Polygamy appears first (Gen. 4: 19) in conjunction with murder, and in the line of Cain.

Ver. 9. **And I say unto you.** Spoken in the house in answer to a question of the disciples (Mark 10: 10, 11).—**Except for fornication.** This one ground for divorce, mentioned as a matter of course, makes no exception to the rule laid down in vers. 5, 6; this offence is in direct antagonism to the idea of marriage and a practical dissolution of it. The Church of Rome which makes marriage a sacrament, denies the validity even of this ground, and forbids either party to marry again during the life of the other. She allows only a separation from bed and board, but not from the bond of matrimony. All sins of unchastity are sins against the marriage tie (comp. chap. 5: 27: 32), loosening it in spirit, but this act of sin is the only ground for dissolving it *in form*.—**And he that marrieth her, who is divorced on improper grounds** (not 'any' divorced woman).—**Committeth adultery**, because she is still the wife of the husband from whom she has been improperly divorced, and neither of them can marry another in the sight of God.—The last clause of ver. 9 is omitted in ancient MSS. (and by Tischendorf, ed. VIII., and Westcott and Hort), and may have been inserted from the parallel passages, Matt. 5: 32; Mark 10: 12; Luke 16: 18.—Divorce laws should be framed in the light of ver. 8; not to *facilitate*, but to *regulate*, a matter arising solely from the sinfulness of mankind. The elevation of woman from a condition of slavery

10 put away committeth adultery. The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is
 11 not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is
 12 given. For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

has been the result of Christ's teaching in regard to marriage; yet some women, thus elevated, have advocated divorce 'for any cause.'

Ver. 10. **If the case.** The whole theory of marriage just announced is referred to. The low views then held may be inferred from what the disciples said: **it is not expedient to marry**; the ideal seemed so high, that its application seemed almost impossible even to the disciples (and to the poet Milton).

Ver. 11. **All men cannot receive**, or, 'not all can receive,' **this saying**. This high ideal can be understood and put into practice only by those who get illumination and power from God. As a rule, the less Christianity, the lower the ideal of marriage, the more numerous the sins against this state.

Ver. 12. **For there are eunuchs.** Assuming that the married state is the normal one, three classes are here mentioned who should (or may) remain in celibacy: (1.) those who from natural incapacity or inaptitude, have no desire or power to marry; (2.) those who have been mutilated, a class very common once in the Orient, and not unknown now; (3.) those who voluntarily in a spirit of self-consecration abstain from marriage, whether for the first or second time, to work the better for Christ's cause. The first case has no moral quality, the second implies misfortune, the third has a moral value. But it is not set forth here as a law for the ministry, or any particular class of society; nor is there any merit in celibacy superior to that of chastity in the married state.—**He that is able to receive it.** This does not imply a superiority in those who can receive it, but simply that such a sacrifice would be expected from some of His disciples. St. Paul (1 Cor. 7: 32-34), St. John, and thousands of noble men and women have followed the hint from the purest of motives, to the benefit of the world; but the Church of Rome erred in forcing that exception as a rule upon the clergy, contrary to the fact that Peter (ch. 8: 14), and other apostles (1 Cor. 9: 5), and the majority of the clergy (1 Tim. 3: 2) in the Apostolic Church were married.—On the whole subject of marriage and celibacy, comp. Schaff's *History of the Apostolic Church*, § 112, pp. 448-454, and his notes on Lange's *Matthew*, p. 339.

CHAPTER 19: 13-15.

Jesus blesses little Children.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children,
that he should lay his hands on them, and pray: and
14 the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer
the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto

Jesus blesses little Children, vers. 13-15.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17. This incident seems to be in proper chronological position. It properly follows the discourse on marriage and gives sanction to the family and its offspring. Luke's account at this point again becomes parallel to that of Matthew and Mark. The account of Mark is the fullest and adds several striking features. The greatness of Christ in His love of little children.

Ver. 13. **Then were there brought unto him;** probably by their parents. An encouragement to parents to bring even 'infants' to Christ, since, according to Luke, such were among the little children. Thus the doubts of the disciples about the marriage state were answered. It was customary to bring children on their first birthday to the Rabbi in the synagogue to be blessed.—**Laid his hands on them.** A recognition of Christ's power to bless, since He healed by laying on His hands.—**And the disciples rebuked them.** They were engaged in an interesting discussion about marriage, etc. Abstract theories about household relations should not stand between the Lord and little children. Mark says that 'Jesus was moved with indignation' at the rebuke of the disciples; so tender and deep was His sympathy with children.

Ver. 14. **Suffer the little children, etc.** The natural impulse would be to bring children to Him; do not check it.—**Forbid them not, as the disciples did, and many since then.—To such belongeth the kingdom of heaven.** 'Such,' i. e., children proper and all those who have a childlike spirit, or the spirit of trust, love, simplicity and humility (comp. 18: 1-14; Mark 10: 15; Luke 18: 17). Children probably form the majority in the kingdom of heaven, since the half of the human family die in infancy, lost in Adam, but saved in Christ.

Lessons: 1. Since 'to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven,' the earlier children become Christians the better. 2. Since they are to come (or be brought) to Christ, who is a Saviour, the doctrine of universal depravity is not denied here, but moderated. Childlike innocence a relic of Paradise lost. 3. They may be 'forbidden,' both by neglect and injudicious teaching: (a) by not being taught of Christ, through word and example; (b) by being taught legalism, i. e., 'Be good, or God will not love you,' instead of this: Christ loves you, therefore go to Him in order to be good. 4. As they were brought, and

15 me: for of such is * the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

CHAPTER 19: 16-26.

The Rich Young Ruler, and the Discourse of our Lord on Riches.

16 And behold, one came to him and said, ¹²Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal

* For "of such is" read "to such belongeth" with marg. Or, *of such is*. So in Mark 10: 14; Luke 8: 16.—*Am. Com.*

¹Or, *Teacher*.

² Some ancient authorities read *Good Master*. See Mark 10: 17; Luke 18: 18.

were actually blessed by Christ (Mark 10: 16); through the faith of parents a *seed of faith* may exist in the heart of a child, so that the infant members of a Christian family *ought to be* Christian children, and their education conducted in the confident expectation that they will show the fruits of faith.

Ver. 15. Mark more fully: 'And He took them in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands on them.' Natural affection and Christian blessing combined. Infants capable of a blessing, though not conscious of an obligation.

The Rich Young Ruler, vers. 16-26.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 10: 17-27; Luke 18: 18-27. This section is in its proper chronological position in all the Synoptical Gospels. Our Lord 'departed thence' (ver. 15), but on the way (Mark 10: 17) He was met by this 'ruler' (Luke 18: 18). Our Lord first presented the high ideal of marriage, the closest human tie, with a hint that even this must be subordinate to the claims of His kingdom; then the position of children, next in order of intimacy: now comes the relation to earthly possessions, which men value next (though through the influence of sin sometimes most of all). Our Lord meets the young ruler, whom He 'loved,' on his ground, leads him to a recognition of the idol that prevents him from entering the kingdom.—Going away sorrowful is not entering into life.—Riches are a hindrance so great, that just here comes in the declaration of God's saving omnipotence.—Our Lord speaks the truth to rich and poor alike. There is no word here that points to a 'community of goods,' though this was the occasion, were that doctrine correct. The giving up of wealth when it is an idol, the crucifixion to the world, here enjoined, have a moral quality. There is none in a forced equality of possessions, nor involuntary poverty with the hope of winning heaven. Agrarianism, no less than avarice, makes wealth the chief good; trusting in poverty, no less than trusting in riches, fosters pride. *Love of money* (not money itself) is a root (not the only root) of all evil. A pauper may love money as much as a millionaire.

Ver. 16. **Behold.** The circumstance was remarkable in view of the opposition of the Pharisees.—**One came.** He 'ran' and 'kneeled.'

17 life? And he said unto him, ¹Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the 18 commandments. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear 19 false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and,

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God.* See Mark 10: 18; Luke 18: 19.

to Christ (Mark). He was 'young,' 'very rich,' a 'ruler of the synagogue,' like Nicodemus, and an honest, earnest seeker after truth and life, with some admiration for, and confidence in, Jesus as a human teacher. But he was in error, as honest and earnest seekers may be. He was in the position of a humanitarian who acknowledges the goodness of Christ as a mere man, and needs to be brought to the conclusion that the very perfection of Christ's humanity in a sinful world implies His divinity.—**What good thing**, etc. Whether a Pharisee or not, he thought he could earn eternal life. Hence the passage must not be wrested in favor of legalism,

Ver. 17. **Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good.** This is the reading of the oldest MSS. and versions, and adopted by the critical editors. The common version follows a reading corrected to conform with the other two accounts. The variety sheds light on the whole conversation. Either two questions and answers occurred, or Matthew gives this form to bring out the true sense. There is but one *good Being* and one *good thing*, namely, God Himself.—What the young ruler needed was not to do some good work or to learn some speculative morality, but to rise to the highest source of goodness, to acknowledge God as the Supreme Good, and to act accordingly. This strikes at his sin, the love of riches. It does not mean: 'Ask God; read His commandments, do not ask me.'—The other accounts present this alternative: Christ either claims that He is Himself God, or denies His own perfect goodness, which would be inconsistent with His claims and other declarations. The answer rebukes the error of the question, that eternal life can be won by good works.—**But if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments**, The possibility of doing this perfectly had just been denied. Our Lord therefore seeks to show the young man how much he falls short of such a keeping of the commandments. What follows shows that his obedience, however strict, did not recognize God as the supreme good.

Ver. 18. **Which?** That is, of what kind.—**Thou shalt not kill**, etc. Those commandments involving duties toward our fellow-men are cited, so as to meet the young man on his own ground.

Ver. 19. **Honour thy father and thy mother.** This command-

- 20 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed :
 21 what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and
 22 come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

ment connects the two classes of duties enjoined in the Decalogue, but is here presented as involving duty to man. Hence the position it occupies in all three accounts. The Lord rises from the negative to the positive commandments.—**Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** A summing up of our duties to men, taken from Lev. 19: 18. Comp. Mark 12: 28.

Ver. 20. **All these things have I kept.** Externally moral—perhaps self-righteous—he yet felt that he lacked something. Peace of conscience had not been attained by his keeping of ‘all these.’ He had yet to learn how much he lacked of even comprehending the spirituality of the law.

Ver. 21. **If thou wouldst be perfect.** Mark and Luke: ‘one thing thou lackest.’ One duty still remained to make his obedience complete, judged from his own point of view. Not that he had done all except this one duty, but a *test* is proposed, to prove that the whole obedience lacked the proper motive.—**Sell that thou hast.** In his case love of his possessions was the great hindrance; in another it might have been something else. All we have belongs to Christ, but this command is not to be literally obeyed by every one. The gospel is here put in a legal form to reach the conscience of the young man; the ‘treasure in heaven’ is not bought by voluntary poverty. (Comp. chaps. 5: 12; 6: 20).—**Come, follow me.** The final test. Whenever property interferes with following Christ, it must be given up; and he who would be a Christian must be *ready* to relinquish it for Christ’s sake, not to win salvation, nor to buy a superior place in heaven.

Ver. 22. **He went away sorrowful.** Not unaffected, he yet went away.—**Had great possessions;** and was possessed by them, a slave of his wealth. Nothing further is known of him, As Jesus ‘loved him’ (a significant touch of Mark 10: 21), and therefore taught him his duty, that love may have followed him and led him to a right decision. But the silence about his future course hints that whatever light and love one receives, the decision is to be made by the man himself.—Our Lord’s comments on ‘riches’ show that this young man’s pride was intrenched in his wealth; a part of it he might have been willing to pay for ‘eternal life;’ but being his idol, it must be entirely relinquished before he could enter the kingdom of heaven. The hindrance is often removed by God’s Providence.

23 And Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom
 24 of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich
 25 man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when the disciples heard it, they were astonished exceedingly,
 26 saying, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon *them*, said to them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Ver. 23. **It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.** Comp. Mark 10: 24: 'them that trust in riches.' Yet such trust is the natural result of possession, or even of the strong desire to possess.

Ver. 24. **Easier for a camel, etc.** A strong proverbial declaration of impossibility (comp. ver. 26). This has been weakened in two ways: (1.) by the change of a single letter (in some manuscripts) of the original, altering 'camel' into 'rope,' (*κάμηλος* into *κάμιλος*); (2.) by explaining **the eye of a needle** to mean the small gate for foot passengers at the entrance to cities. The first is incorrect, the second uncertain and unnecessary. The exception is mentioned in ver. 26, and such exceptions are not infrequent. In the Talmud the same saying occurs twice about an elephant, and in the Koran (*Sur.* 7: 38) about the camel and the paradise, as a figurative expression of extreme improbability. 'The camel was more familiar to the hearers of the Saviour than the elephant, and on account of the hump on its back it was especially adapted to symbolize earthly wealth as a heavy load and serious impediment to entrance through the narrow gate of the kingdom of heaven.' (Schaff in Lange on *Matthew*.) Comp. the phrase: 'to swallow a camel,' used by our Lord, chap. 23: 24.

Ver. 25. **Who then can be saved?** Since all may have some possessions, and naturally love to have more. Their temporal views of the kingdom were also mixed with their question.

Ver. 26. **Looking upon them.** To give force to this profound statement, and perhaps in kindly sympathy with their weakness and want of understanding.—**With men this is impossible.** Not only in their judgment, but with their power, unaided by the grace of God.—**With God all things are possible.** God's grace not only can, but does, save many who are rich in spite of all the hindrances their wealth occasions. Examples of pious rich men in the O. T.: Abraham, Joseph, Job, David; in the N.: Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (27: 57). An encouragement to labor for the conversion of the rich as well as the poor. The great use of wealth in the hands of a liberal and conscientious disciple for the support and spread of the gospel at home and abroad.

CHAPTER 19: 27-20: 16.

The Reward Promised to the Apostles and the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, illustrating the Nature of that Reward (of Free Grace).

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall
28 we have? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones,

The Promised Reward. Vers. 27-30.

CONTENTS. Comp. Mark 10: 38-39; Luke 18: 28-30. The direct reply to Peter's question is found in all three accounts; the parable is peculiar to Matthew. It loses most of its seeming difficulties, when connected with the previous conversation. The question of Peter had reference to a *pre-eminent* reward, and after the promise to them (which is changed immediately into a promise to all) this parable teaches that this reward is of free grace, and that the Apostles themselves, though first called and first to forsake all, should not on that account expect a pre-eminent reward. Self-sacrifice for Christ, not priority in time, is the ground of pre-eminence. Chapter 19: 30 introduces a statement to be illustrated ('But many,' etc.); chap. 20: 16 repeats it as enforced. ('So the last,' etc.)

Ver. 27. **Lo, we have left all.** Whatever they had, and not all of them were poor.—**What then shall we have?** 'We' in contrast to this young man who did not stand the test. The answer indicates a little self-righteous boasting in the question: the parable would oppose any remnant of a mercenary spirit lurking in it. Pre-eminence was probably anticipated by Peter, and is promised in the next verse.

Ver. 28. **Ye, i. e., the Apostles.**—**In the regeneration,** better: 'renovation,' i. e., the spiritual renewal of all things, the return to a perfect state. Comp. Acts 3: 21; 2 Pet. 3: 13; Rev. 21: 5. The word here used (*palingenesia*) occurs only once again, Tit. 3: 5, but with reference to baptism as the sign or instrument of *individual* regeneration, which is otherwise expressed by such verbs as 'to be born or begotten afresh' or 'from above' (John 3: 3, 7), or 'of God' (John 1: 13), or 'to be born again' (1 Pet. 1: 23; comp. ver. 3). The *palingenesia* here applies to the general change of the whole world, and is the same which Peter calls 'the restitution (*apokatastasis*) of all things,' when 'seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord shall come' (Acts 3: 19-21), i. e., at the glorious coming of Christ in His victorious kingdom. In that triumph the Apostles were to share. Their high position as pillars of the church militant is a partial, but not the final fulfilment of this promise.—**When the Son of man shall sit.** A definite period, when our Lord shall appear on the throne of his glory—

29 judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother,¹ or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive ²a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal 30 life. But many shall be last *that are first*; and first *that* 20: 1 *are last*. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is * a householder, which went out early in

¹ Many ancient authorities add *or wife*: as in Luke 18: 29.

² Some ancient

authorities read *manifold*.

* For "that is" read "that was."—*Am. Com.*

the throne which belongs to; results from, and manifests His glory, as conqueror, ruler, and judge.—**Upon twelve thrones.** Christ will take His seat upon His own throne; the Twelve will be promoted to thrones prepared for them.—**Judging.** This refers more to their high position than to acts of judging.—**The twelve tribes of Israel.** Scarcely the Jewish nation, since our Lord had already told them that His Church was to be distinct from this. Probably Christ's people, among whom the Apostles shall occupy the most exalted position at His return. The promise repeated at the institution of the Lord's Supper, Luke 22: 30. Extended to the saints who 'shall judge the world,' 1 Cor. 6: 2.

Ver. 29. **And every one.** The promise is of general application.—**Houses.** 'Homes,' household ties, rather than 'possessions,' which are mentioned afterwards.—**Brethren,** etc. 'The family relations are mentioned in the order in which they would be left.'—'Wife' is to be omitted both here and in Mark 10: 29, but is found in Luke 18: 29.—**For my name's sake.** Mark adds: 'and the gospel's.' Out of love to Christ and to advance His cause. The motive is every thing; self-denial to buy God's favor is no self-denial.—**Hundred-fold.** Mark adds: 'now in this time.' Abundant compensation will be given even in this life. Lange: 'Believers are to find a new and eternal home and country, new and eternal relationships, and new and eternal possessions, of which the blessings enjoyed by them on earth are to be the earnest and foretaste. All these promises are summed up in that of being made heirs of eternal life (Rom. 8).' Comp. Mark 10: 29, 30.

Ver. 30. **But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last.** A general truth in proverbial form; here a caution against trusting to appearances or to the permanence of present circumstances and conditions. The promise must be accompanied by a caution, especially in view of the coming apostasy of Judas. The Twelve also were liable to mistake priority in time of calling for priority in position,—a frequent mistake in every human society, but doubly a mistake where God's free grace is concerned.

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Chap. 20: 1-16.

Chap. 20. Immediately connected with the preceding verses. Ver.

2 the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a ¹penny a 3 day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing in the

¹ See marginal note on chap. 18: 28. [*Am. Com., shilling.*]

1. **A man that is a householder.** The 'householder' signifies God; the 'vineyard' the kingdom of heaven (comp. Isa. 5: 1-7; Cant. 8: 12); the 'steward' (ver. 8) Christ; the 'twelfth hour' of the day, or the evening, the coming of Christ; the other 'hours,' the different periods of calling into service.—**Labourers.** Specially the Apostles, yet including all Christians.

Ver. 2. **For a penny,** better 'shilling' (*denarius*). About eight pence of English money, or sixteen American cents. Its relative or purchasing value was then still greater (at least three or five times). It was the usual pay for a day's hired labor, and more than a Roman soldier's wages, which was only two-thirds of a denarius. Hence it denotes a comparatively large sum. The 'penny' of the O. V. makes the impression of a very small sum, and ought to have been changed in the Revision as suggested by the Am. Committee. (*Denarius, denary, denar, drachma, silverling, franc, sixpence*, etc., have also been proposed.)—**Explanations:** (1) The general idea is of reward, but with a special reference to temporal rewards, which may be received while eternal life is lost. Inconsistent with the dignity of the parable, and inapplicable to the Apostles. Besides, the penny was paid at the close of the day, *i. e.*, at the end of man's life or the day of final account, just when the temporal reward ceases. (2) Eternal salvation is meant; for while the idea of reward is present, the whole drift of the parable teaches us that God's grace is free (ver. 15). The mercenary spirit of the first laborers has a primary reference to the Jews and their prejudice against the Gentiles. This envious disposition is thus rebuked. The Gentile converts went to work as soon as they were called, without a definite agreement as to price, trusting in the justice and mercy of the householder. They are commended, and to them was given far more than they could ask or deserve.—Those first called represent *nationally* the Jews, called with a definite covenant; *individually*, those called in early life and who have spent their days in God's service. Such are warned against boasting, or claiming a higher reward than those called afterwards.

Ver. 3. **Third hour.** About nine o'clock in the morning, when the market-place would be full. The Jewish day was reckoned from sunrise (6 A. M.) to sunset (6 P. M.), according to time of the year.—**Idle.** 'The greatest man of business on the market-place of the world is a mere idle gazer' (Stier). 'An idle brain is the devil's workshop.' On the special interpretations of the different hours, see the close of the section.

4 marketplace idle; and to them he said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you.
 5 And they went their way. Again he went out about
 6 the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh *hour* he went out, and found others standing; and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here
 7 all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into
 8 the vineyard. And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto
 9 the first. And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a ¹penny.
 10 And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every
 11 man a ¹penny. And when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have
 12 spent *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden of the day and

¹ See marginal note on chap. 18: 28.

Ver. 4. **Whatsoever is right I will give you.** The wages promised are indefinite; the correct reading in ver. 7 omits all promise of reward. The parable illustrates the truth that salvation is of grace.

Ver. 7. **Because no man hath hired us.** The eleventh hour laborers are accepted, but they were mainly those who had no opportunity at an earlier period.

Ver. 8. **His steward.** Christ, the overseer of the house of God, entrusted with the whole economy of salvation, including the distribution of the final reward (Heb. 8: 6; John 5: 27; Rev. 2: 7, 10, 17, 28, etc.). It was the Jewish custom to pay laborers at the close of the day.

Ver. 9. **They received every man a penny, or 'shilling.'** More than they expected. God does not measure His reward by the length of man's life, but by the fidelity of his services, for the labor is not to earn the reward, but to prepare for it.

Ver. 11. **They murmured,** like the elder brother of the Prodigal (Luke 15: 31). The Greek tense indicates prolonged murmuring. Jewish pride and envy.

Ver. 12. **These last have spent an hour, etc.** A well-grounded complaint, if salvation were of works.

13 the ¹scorching heat. But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou 14 agree with me for a ²penny? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this 15 last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil, be- 16 cause I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last.

¹ Or, *hot wind*.² See marginal note on chap. 18: 28.

Ver. 13. Friend. The Gr. word denotes any temporary connection; in the mouth of the Lord even with a rebuke, as ch. 22: 12; 26: 50.—**Didst thou not agree with me?** The legal claim is answered in a legal way.

Ver. 14. Go thy way. This does not necessarily imply that the first were finally rejected, receiving only the temporal good they bargained for.—**I will give,** 'it is my will or pleasure to give.' The ground is the wish of the householder.

Ver. 15. Or is thine eye evil. Envy (from *invidere*) was the real motive, and the envy was occasioned by the kindness of the householder: **because I am good,** or 'kind.'

Ver. 16. The lesson of the parable. The proverbial expression of chap. 19: 80, recurs with a different order. The parable, therefore, illustrates the truth that the order in the calling of individuals and nations will in many (not all) cases be reversed in their final position in heaven. An encouragement to those called late in life: a solemn warning to those called early, lest they be overtaken by others or forfeit their reward altogether. The admonition was intended, first, for the Apostles, especially for Peter, whose question called forth this parable; then for Jewish Christians generally, in their feelings to the Gentile converts, and in their legal tendency; and lastly, for all Christians who enjoy special spiritual privileges and the great blessing of an early acquaintance with the Saviour.—'Many are called, but few are chosen' (O. V.) This is to be omitted, though found in many authorities. Inserted from ch. 22: 14, where the words are genuine. The meaning is, many are called to be heirs of salvation, yet few chosen to be pre-eminent. Free grace *within* the Church is thus indicated.

Special applications: The morning, the age from Adam to Noah; the third hour, from Noah to Abraham; the sixth hour, from Abraham to Moses; the ninth hour, from Moses to Christ, and the eleventh hour, from Christ to the end of the world. The different ages in the life of individuals: childhood, youth, manhood, old age, and the years of decrepitude. Lange: the first laborers, Jewish Christians generally, who were characterized by a mercenary spirit (the Apostles are included as a warning to them); the second class, 'standing in the mar-

CHAPTER 20: 17-34.

Further Revelation respecting His Sufferings; the Ambitious Request of the Mother of James and John; the Healing of two Blind Men near Jericho.

17 And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and

ket-place,' the Jewish proselytes; those hired at the sixth and ninth hour, the Gentile races; 'the eleventh hour' laborers, the fruits of missionary labors in latter days. Plumptre: There, also will be in heaven some first, some last, but the difference of degree will depend, not on the duration of service, but on the temper and character of the worker.

Further Revelation respecting His Sufferings; the Ambitious Request of the Mother of James and John; the Healing of two Blind Men near Jericho, vers. 17-34. (Comp. Mark 10: 32-52; Luke 18: 31-43).

The final journey to Jerusalem begins. The approach of His death is mentioned only in chap. 19 to the Twelve, more specific in its details. The crucifixion beginning of chap. 19) to Jesus' account. On the way from Peraea (see note at the request in behalf of her two sons, Malome, the wife of Zebedee, prefers an ambitious by the prediction, and leads to further 'sons of thunder.' This was probably occasioned before the Passover, our Lord performed instruction. Reaching Jericho about a week they mentions two blind men, Mark and Liti miracle mentioned in vers. 30-34. Mat- Matthew and Mark say that the miracle occurred but one, the former giving his name. 'as He was come nigh unto Jericho.' He also narrates they went out of Jericho; Luke and the parable of the ten pounds, as following this miracle and the interview with Zaccheus immediately preceding the journey to Jerusalem. Accepting Luke's order, we state that our Lord remained for a day at Jericho, and that the healing occurred on the next day some excursion

Prediction of the Crucifixion, vers. 17-19. Parallel passages: Mark 10: 32-34; Luke 18: 31-34.

Ver. 17. And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way he said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and shall be crucified, and shall be killed, and after three days shall he rise again. Ver. 18. We go up to Jerusalem. On the journey to Jerusalem, which He had previously predicted (chap. 16: 21). Delivered unto the hands of men. A double betrayal is implied: first by His own people to the chief priests, then by His own people to the chief priests.

19 scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall be raised up.

20 Then came to him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, worshipping *him*, and asking a certain
21 thing of him. And he said unto her, What wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Command that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on
22 thy left hand, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They say

tiles.—**They shall condemn him to death.** A reference to the judicial condemnation on the part of the Sanhedrin (chap. 27: 1).

Ver. 19. **And shall deliver him unto the Gentiles.** Comp. chap. 27: 2 sqq.—**To mock, and to scourge, and to crucify.** Mark and Luke add: 'spit upon.' Fulfilled in every detail.—**And the third day he shall be raised up.** This is added as before. The request of Salome indicates that the disciples did not understand the prediction as a whole (Luke 18: 34), plain as it is to us.

The Ambitious Request of the Zebedees, vers. 20-28. Parallel passage: Mark 10: 35-45.

Ver. 20. **The mother of the sons of Zebedee.** Salome, according to an ancient tradition, the daughter of Joseph by a previous marriage; more probably the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus; hence she thought she had a special claim. Comp. John 19: 25, and notes on chap. 4: 21: 10: 2; 13: 55. The request was suggested by her sons (comp. Mark 10: 35), James and John, who were called 'Boanerges' (Mark 3: 17), and had been with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (chap. 17: 1)—**Worshipping him**, i. e., saluting Him with reverence, as was usual in asking favor of a king.—**Asking a certain thing.** She asked a favor, but did not at once tell what it was, probably because doubtful of the propriety of the request, or waiting for the Lord to speak first.

Ver. 21. **One on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy kingdom.** The highest places of honor, implying special authority also; as is indicated by the answer (ver. 25). The request was based upon ignorance (comp. ver. 22), and prompted by ambition (comp. vers. 25-27), however natural it may have been.

Ver. 22. **Ye know not what ye ask.** Addressed to James and John, who had prompted their mother. When John saw the crucified robbers on the right and left hand of his dying Lord, he knew what he had asked.—**To drink the cup?** A frequent Scriptural

- 23 unto him, *We are able.* He saith unto them, *My cup indeed ye shall drink : but to sit on my right hand, and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father.*
- 24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with in-
- 25 dignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, *Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great*
- 26 *ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you : but whosoever would become great*

figure for the Providential portion assigned to any one; especially for a suffering lot. It refers to inward anguish here. 'With the baptism,' etc. Omitted by the best authorities. It occurs in Mark, referring to the outward persecutions.—**We are able.** They were not the least courageous of the Twelve (comp. John 18: 15); but they also forsook Him and fled (chap. 26: 56) in the hour of trial.

Ver. 23. **My cup indeed ye shall drink.** James was the first martyr among the Twelve, being beheaded by order of Herod, A. D. 44 (Acts 12: 2); John died a natural death at an advanced age; but in a spiritual sense his was the longest martyrdom. **Is not mine,** etc. Either, it is not a boon to be gained by solicitation; or it is not in My power; but it will be assigned to those for whom it has been prepared according 'to the eternal predestination of eternal positions in the kingdom of God.' Yet these two might occupy the position. Christ affirms that His will as Ruler in His kingdom accords with the eternal purpose of God; a purpose which forbade their ambitious solicitation, because its individual objects were as yet concealed.

Ver. 24. **The ten,** including Matthew, who writes the account. A proof of humility and truthfulness.—**They were moved with indignation concerning.** This displeasure was no more praiseworthy than the ambition of the two, and was speedily discountenanced (comp. Mark 10: 41, 42). 'It seems as if the jealousies and intrigues of an earthly court were breaking out among the disciples of Jesus.'

Ver. 25. **The rulers of the Gentiles, i. e., 'secular princes.'** The Jewish form of government, as ordained by God, was designed to exclude tyranny.—**Lord it over them, i. e.,** exercise tyrannical and arbitrary power.—**Their great ones.** Either conquerors and usurpers, or the officers of state.

Ver. 26. **But not so shall it be among you.** To maintain superiority of rank by force is not Christian, even if encouraged by ecclesiastical organizations. It is worst of all in such organizations, for freedom in the Christian communion is necessary to true civil freedom.—**But whosoever would become great among you, i. e., great in the next life, shall be your minister, i. e., in this life.** Humility

27 among you shall be your ¹minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your ²servant:
 28 even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

29 And as they went out from Jericho, a great mul-

¹ Or, *servant*.

² Gr. *bondservant*.

manifesting itself in a service of love is the measure of Christian greatness, actually constituting it here, but acknowledged hereafter. This does not forbid official orders in the Church, but real greatness is independent of such orders. However necessary, they are intended to advance the liberty of the Church. Office in the Church is to be a service. True servants of God the best servants of the people. The dignity of service in the kingdom of heaven. 'To serve God is true liberty.'

Ver. 28. **Even as the Son of man.** What He asked of them was what He did Himself.—**Came.** His appearing in the world was **not to be ministered unto**, not to be personally served by others, nor to exercise an external authority for His own external interest, **but to minister**, to serve others, as His whole ministry showed. Christ's *example* enforces the lesson of humility, but a deeper truth is now for the first time declared.—**And to give his life.** The crowning act of His ministering to others. The first distinct revelation of the plan of redemption, an incidental utterance of a most profound truth.—**A ransom for many.** 'Ransom' may mean only the payment for a life destroyed (Exod. 21: 20), the price paid for the redemption of a slave (Lev. 25: 5). But it also means 'propitiation' (Prov. 13: 8), and the word translated 'for' (*ἀντί*, not *ὑπέρ* or *περί*) means 'in the place of;' hence this passage affirms that our Lord's death was vicarious; by His death as a ransom-price the 'many' are to be redeemed from the guilt and power of sin. Comp. 26: 28; Rom. 3: 24; 1 Cor. 6: 20; 1 Tim. 2: 6; 1 Pet. 1: 19. 'Ransom' is derived from the Latin *redemptio*, through the French *rançon*. As soon as the disciples could bear it, they were taught this central truth of the gospel, to which they gave such prominence, after the Holy Spirit came upon them. This tender rebuke of their ambition bases the cardinal grace of humility upon the cardinal doctrine of the atonement. 'Many,' the great multitude of the redeemed which 'no man can number' (Rev. 6: 9).

The Healing of the Blind near Jericho. Vers. 29-34.

Parallel passages: Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 18: 35-43.

Ver. 29. **And as they went out from Jericho.** Probably after the conversation just mentioned our Lord entered Jericho, and meeting a multitude there, passed out of the city with them and returned again to encounter Zacchæus (Luke 19: 2-10). On this excursion He passed the blind men. He left Jericho for Bethany on noon of Friday (8th of

30 titude followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, Lord, have mercy
 31 on us, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace: but they cried out the more, saying, Lord, have mercy
 32 on us, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I
 33 should do unto you? They say unto him, Lord,
 34 that our eyes may be opened. And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes: and straightway they received their sight, and followed him.

Nisan), a week before the crucifixion. On Saturday He was in Bethany (John 12: 1). Jericho was in the tribe of Benjamin, on the borders of Ephraim, about two hours journey from the Jordan, and the hilly road thence to Jerusalem was difficult and dangerous (Luke 10: 30-34). The district was a blooming oasis in the midst of an extended sandy plain, watered and fruitful, rich in palms, roses and balsam: hence probably the name ('the fragrant city'). Built by the Canaanites, and destroyed by Joshua (Josh. 6: 26), it was rebuilt and fortified at a later day, and became the seat of a school of the prophets. Herod the Great beautified it, and it was one of the most pleasant places in the land. In the twelfth century scarcely a vestige of the place remained. There is now on the site a wretched village, Richa or Ericha, with about 200 inhabitants. Robinson, however, locates the old Jericho in the neighborhood of the fountain of Elisha (two miles north-west of Richa). See Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 305.

Ver. 30. **Two blind men.** Mark and Luke mention but one ('blind Bartimæus, the Son of Timæus'), probably a well-known person, and hence especially mentioned.—**Lord, have mercy on us, thou Son of David,** the better supported order.

Ver. 31. **That they should hold their peace.** The multitude did not object to the title, 'son of David' (comp. chap. 21: 9), but thought the cry would annoy our Lord.—**But they cried out the more.** In persistent faith.

Ver. 32. **And Jesus stood still.** He now allows Himself to be publicly called: 'Son of David;' comp. His previous conduct in a similar case (chap. 9: 27, 28). Mark adds that those about the blind man said: 'Be of good courage, rise; He calleth thee,' showing that they too responded to the Lord's compassion.

Ver. 34. **Touched their eyes.** Peculiar to Matthew; the other Gospels insert: 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' The question of ver. 32

CHAPTER 21: 1-11.

The Royal Entry into Jerusalem.

21 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and came unto Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then

was designed to call forth an expression of this faith.—‘Thousands have read this simple and touching story as a truthful history of their own spiritual blindness, and its removal through the abounding grace of Jesus Christ’ (J. J. Owen).

The Royal Entry into Jerusalem, vers. 1-11.

Parallel passages: Mark 11: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-40; John 12: 12-19.

CHRONOLOGY. The date of the public entry into Jerusalem (narrated by all four Evangelists) was *Sunday, the 10th of the month Nisan*, which nearly corresponds to our April and our Easter season. We hold that our Lord ate the Passover at the usual time, the 14th of Nisan (see on chap. 26: 17), and was crucified on Friday, the 15th. In the year of our Lord's death (A. D. 30, A. U. 783) the 14th of Nisan fell on a Friday (as Wieseler has shown, *Chronol. Synopse*, p. 176). Reckoning back from this date, we infer that He left Jericho on Friday, the 6th of Nisan, reached Bethany the same day (‘six days before the passover;’ John 12: 18). and remained there over the Sabbath. On the evening of that day, after the Sabbath had ended, the anointing by Mary in the house of Simon the leper took place (See John 12: 2). John explicitly says (12: 12) that the entry took place the next day, that is, the day after the feast in Bethany. The date is significant, for on the 10th of Nisan the Paschal lamb was selected (Exod. 12: 3), being kept until the 14th, when it was slain in the evening (Ex. 12: 5), and eaten at the beginning of the 15th (this being the first day of the seven days of unleavened bread, lasting from sunset till sunset, according to Jewish reckoning).

This public entry was intentional, not accidental, nor caused by the zeal of his followers. It prepared the way for His sufferings by a public avowal of His mission, and was a temporary assumption of His royal prerogative, to hasten a decision in Jerusalem. A glimpse of glory given to believing men, but it only increased the hatred of the rulers, and hastened His death. Lange: ‘To Himself the kingly procession was a prelude of His passion; but also a symbol of His glorification, of His kingly procession through the world, and of His future Advent. Hence the lesson of Palm Sunday is read as an Advent lesson.’ A remarkable contrast to the procession to Golgotha (Luke 18: 26), both strictly in keeping with the purpose of His mission, ‘to give his life a ransom for many.’ The entry into Jerusalem is celebrated throughout Christendom as Palm Sunday (Sunday before Easter).

Ver. 1. Bethphage (‘house of figs’). Mark and Luke add: ‘and Bethany (‘house of dates’). The two places were near each other, but of the former no trace remains. Bethany lay on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, about two miles from the city, in the place of the miserable Moslem village El-Azariyeh (or Lazariyeh, from Lazarus).—**The mount of Olives.** This lay between Bethphage and Jerusalem, about

2 Jesus sent two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village that is over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose 3 *them*, and bring *them* unto me. And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of

'a Sabbath day's journey' from the city (Acts 1 : 12). There are some olive trees left, but the palms and the cedars have disappeared. There are two roads from Bethany to the city, a winding northern one, a steep footpath directly over the summit, and a southern road, usually taken by horsemen and caravans. The view that Jesus passed over the southern or main road, accords best with the various accounts of the procession and its incidents. See on Luke 19 : 41. The Mount of Olives rises 2,724 feet above the Mediterranean, 300 feet higher than the temple hill (Mt. Moriah), and overlooks every part of Jerusalem, which lies west of it, separated from it by the valley of the 'brook Kedron' (John 18 : 1). The Garden of Gethsemane is at the foot of the Mount. The temple was in the foreground as one looked down on the city from this elevation, which affords by far the best (we may say the only fine) view of Jerusalem. 'From the Mount of Olives you see the holy city in her lonely, melancholy grandeur, with her walls and towers, her churches, mosques, and synagogues, and dome-roofed houses; it is the saddest, and yet the most impressive view in the world' (Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 271).—Then Jesus sent two disciples. Their names are not given. 'The sending of the two disciples proves the deliberate intention of Jesus to give a certain solemnity to this scene. Till then He had withdrawn from popular expressions of homage; but once at least He wished to show Himself as King Messiah to His people. It was a last call addressed by Him to the population of Jerusalem. This course, besides, could no longer compromise His work. He knew that—in any case—death awaited Him in the capital.' (Godet.)

Ver. 2. **Into the village.** Bethphage; not Bethany, from which He had just come.—**An ass tied, and a colt with her.** More particular than Mark and Luke, who mention only the colt. The more literal fulfilment of the prophecy is thus shown. The unbroken animal would be quieter if the mother was with him.—**Loose them.** This act was to be significant of Christ's royal prerogative. Yet in His exercise of power the willingness of men concurs.

Ver. 3. **If any one say aught, etc.** Probably a prediction, as well as a measure of prudence. Both Mark and Luke give it in substance.—**The Lord hath need of them.** The tone is still royal, whether 'the Lord' here means 'Jehovah,' or simply 'the Master.' In the former case the animals would be claimed for religious purposes by Divine authority; in the latter for the well-known prophet. The two meanings coincided in our Lord's intention, whatever the owner would understand.

- 4 them ; and straightway he will send them. Now this
is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was
spoken ¹by the prophet, saying,
5 Tell ye the daughter of Zion,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and riding upon an ass,
And upon a colt the foal of an ass.
6 And the disciples went, and did even as Jesus ap-
7 pointed them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and
put on them their garments ; and he sat thereon.
8 And the most part of the multitude spread their gar-
ments in the way ; and others cut branches from the

¹Or, *through*.

Ver. 4. **Now this hath come to pass.** Matthew here comments on the act from the light of later inspiration. Of this Divine purpose the disciples had no idea at the time (John 12: 16). Lange: 'The occasion and need of the moment was the obvious motive. But to the Spirit of God these historical occasions were arranged coincidences with the prophetic word.'

Ver. 5. **Tell ye the daughter of Zion.** From Isa. 62: 11.—**Behold thy king cometh**, etc. From Zech. 9: 9. Both prophecies were referred to the Messiah by the Jews. Our Lord was to enter Jerusalem in a prominent position, not lost in the crowd thronging to the Passover feast ; but He chooses to ride upon the foal of an ass, the symbol of meekness and peace, not, like worldly conquerors, on horse and chariot, the symbol of pride and war. He thus fulfilled a prophetic announcement, in which the Messiah is represented entering Jerusalem as the King of peace, humble and lowly, yet exercising a dominion 'from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.' The Fathers allegorized the incident, regarding the colt as a symbol of the Gentiles, untamed and unclean before Christ sat upon him and sanctified him, the mother representing Judaism under the yoke of the law.

Ver. 6. Mark and Luke tell of the dialogue with the owners, which was virtually predicted by our Lord.

Ver. 7. **Put on them their garments.** Upper garments or cloaks (loosely thrown over the tunic or inner garment), to serve as a saddle.—**And he sat thereon**, lit., 'on them,' the garments (not the animals). He rode on the colt (Mark and Luke). This unbroken colt remained quiet because the mother was with him, thus affording an incidental evidence of truthfulness.

Ver. 8. **The most (greater) part of the multitude.** Some (probably the greater number, as it would seem from ver. 11) had

9 trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the

come from Galilee, and accompanied the Lord from Jericho; others had come out from Jerusalem (John 12: 12), now crowded on account of the Passover. Most of the latter were probably pilgrims, not inhabitants of the city, and are spoken of by John as 'people that were come to the feast.'—**Spread their garments.** 'Oriental mark of honor at the reception of kings on their entrance into cities, 2 Kings 9: 13' (Lange). Similar acts of respect were occasionally shown to Rabbis by their disciples (Schöttgen). Agamemnon walked on costly carpets into his palace at Mycenæ (Plumptre).—**Others cut branches.** For the same purpose. Probably palm branches (John 12: 13); significant of joy and victory.

Ver. 9. **And the multitudes that went before him, etc.** In responsive chorus. Such 'antiphonies' were common to Jewish worship, especially in the recitation of the Psalms. Those going before had probably come from Jerusalem to meet Him. Dean Stanley: 'Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city, and, as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the south-eastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upward toward Bethany with loud shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there the previous night. The road soon loses sight of Bethany. . . . The two crowds met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded; the other half followed. Gradually the long procession swept over the ridge where first begins "the descent of the Mount of Olives," toward Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the south-eastern corner of the city. The temple and the more northern portions are hid by the slope of Olivet on the right; what is seen is only Mount Zion. . . . It was at this precise point (may it not have been from the sight thus opening upon them?) that the shout of triumph burst forth from the multitude: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" A few moments and the path mounts again; it climbs a rugged ascent; it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city burst into view.' Here He 'wept over it.'—**Hosanna.** The Greek form of a Hebrew word found in Ps. 118: 25, meaning: 'Save now,' or 'give thy salvation' (*hoshiah-na*; *na* is a particle of entreaty added to imperatives). Used as a congratulatory expression in solemn procession round the altar on the joyous feast of Tabernacles and other occasions; here the outburst of Messianic enthusiasm, applied in the highest sense to the Messiah: **the Son of David**—**Blessed is he that cometh, etc.** The greeting to the pilgrims at their entrance into Jerusalem on festival

10 highest. And when he was come into Jerusalem, all
 11 the city was stirred, saying, Who is this? And the
 multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from
 Nazareth of Galilee.

CHAPTER 21: 12-22.

The Second Cleansing of the Temple, and the Curse of the Barren Fig Tree.

12 And Jesus entered into the temple¹ of God, and cast

¹ Many ancient authorities omit of God.

occasions (Ps. 118: 26), and a part of the 'Hallel,' i. e., the six Psalms of praise (Ps. 113-118) which were sung at the night of the Passover from the 14th to the 15th of Nisan. 'He that cometh' (*Habba*) was a title of the Messiah.—**Hosanna in the highest**, i. e., May our Hosanna be ratified in heaven; or, Let Hosanna be sung in heaven, and thence descend upon the Messiah (comp. Luke 2: 14: 'glory in the highest'). Other exclamations are mentioned by Mark and Luke, since in such a multitude they would differ. The crowd with enthusiasm thus hail Him as the Messiah, probably cherishing political hopes which were now raised to the highest pitch. He did not check the popular outburst, but was moved with very different feelings, and those near Him saw His tears and heard His lament over the approaching doom of the city and the people (Luke 19: 41).

Ver. 10. **All the city was stirred**, shaken by this occurrence, as by a violent wind or earthquake. The number of Jews present in Jerusalem at the Passover sometimes exceeded two millions (once under Nero 2,700,000).—**Who is this?** The question indicates a discussion of His character rather than ignorance of His person. The effect on the Pharisees is mentioned in Luke 19: 39, 40; John 12: 19.

Ver. 11. **The prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee.** The Galileans may have spoken of Him with some pride as a well-known prophet; but they do not now declare that He is the Messiah. The question 'Who is this?' may have dampened their enthusiasm, or they expressed only that part of His character which was most intelligible to strangers. Loud praise and timid confession.

The Second Cleansing of the Temple, and the Curse of the Barren Fig Tree. vers. 12-22.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 11: 12-24; Luke 19: 45, 46. The cleansing of the temple and the cursing of the barren fig tree were closely connected. According to the fuller account of Mark, on the day of His triumphal entry our Lord looked round about the temple, passed out to Bethany and lodged there. The next day (Mon-

out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the

day), on His way to Jerusalem, He pronounced the curse on the barren fig tree, afterwards cleansing the temple. The discourse about the fig tree took place the next day (Tuesday). The order of Matthew, in accordance with his habit and purpose, points out more emphatically the unbelief of the chief priests and scribes (ver. 15) as represented by the fig tree.

THE TEMPLE was the centre of the history of Israel from the reign of Solomon down to the destruction A. D. 70. It was built on Mount Moriah, in full sight of Mount Olivet. The first edifice was erected by Solomon, in seven years (B. C. 1005), destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (B. C. 584). The second by Zerubbabel, seventy years afterwards, on the same site. It was inferior to the first, not in size but in magnificence; the ark had been burnt with the first temple, and the Shekinah (or visible Glory) did not return. Its real return was the visit of Christ. This building was frequently desolated and profaned, last of all by the Romans under Herod the Great, but he afterwards restored it and rendered it more magnificent than before to gain favor with the Jews and glory for his reign. It is fully described by Josephus. The word 'temple' was applied to the whole inclosure, which was square in form. Inside its high wall were the 'porches' or covered walks. Of these there were two rows; on the south side three. 'Solomon's porch' was on the east side towards the Mount of Olives, and so was the 'Beautiful Gate,' directly facing the entrance to the temple proper. A second wall within the first divided the more sacred part of the inclosure from that into which Gentiles might enter: hence the outer court was called the *court of the Gentiles*. This was largest on the south side. It grew in importance with the increase of proselytism. The more sacred inclosure was an oblong square; the part nearest the Beautiful Gate was called the *court of the women*, and here the Jews commonly worshipped. On the western side of this court was a high wall, beyond this the *court of the Israelites*, entered after an ascent of fifteen steps by the *Gate Nicanor*. All around this court were rooms for the use of the Levites, and within it, separated from it by a low wall, was the *court of the priests*. At the eastern end of this court stood the altar of burnt offering and the laver, and here the daily service of the temple was performed. Within this court was the temple itself. In front of it was an elevated porch, and by the entrance, on the east side, stood the pillars Jachin and Boaz. The *Holy place*, a room sixty feet long and thirty broad, contained the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread and the altar of incense. Beyond this was the *Holy of Holies*, a square apartment, separated from the Holy Place by a costly veil. Into this the High Priest entered once a year. White marble was the material chiefly used in the whole structure, and gold and silver plating was frequent in the more sacred parts of the edifice. Elevated as it was, and dazzling to the eye, as one came over 'the mountains of Jerusalem,' it could not fail to produce a powerful impression. Designed to convey a spiritual lesson, it too often only awakened pride. It has been regarded as the symbol of the dwelling-place of Jehovah; a figure of the human form; a symbol of heaven; a figure of the Jewish theocracy. But its highest significance was as a type of the body of Christ (John 2: 21). In this view it was none the less the dwelling-place of Jehovah.

The temple of Herod was completely destroyed by the Roman army, A. D. 70. In its place stands now the Mohammedan 'Mosque of Omar,' or the 'Dome of the Rock,' the

13 seats of them that sold the doves; and he saith unto them, It is written, My house shall be called a house
14 of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers. And the blind and the lame came to him in the tem-

most prominent and the most beautiful building in Jerusalem, and inferior only to the Mosque of Mecca. (See a description in Schaff's *Through Bible Lands*, p. 256).

Ver. 12. And Jesus entered into the temple of God. On the day of His entry, He had entered it and 'looked round' (Mark 11: 11), as if to take formal possession of it. This entrance was on Monday to purify it; on Tuesday He took final leave of it (chap. 24: 1). This was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Haggai (2: 9): 'The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former.'—**Cast out**, from the court of the Gentiles.—**Sold and bought.** A market was held there, for the sale of animals and those things necessary for the temple service. Not the less a desecration because so great a convenience. So now on the place before the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem all sorts of merchandise are carried on, especially at the Easter season.—**Money changers.** The temple tribute must be paid in Jewish coin (Exod. 30: 13), while Roman money was at that time the currency of Palestine. The agents for collecting this tribute (chap. 17: 24) found it more convenient to exchange money at Jerusalem, and may have themselves been the 'money changers.'—**The seats**, or 'stands.'—**The doves.** Needed for offerings by the poor and at the purification of women (Lev. 5: 7; 12: 8; Luke 2: 24).—No resistance seems to have been offered. The traffickers were doubtless awed by the superhuman authority and dignity of our Lord. By physical force they might easily have overpowered Him.

Ver. 13. It is written. The first clause is from Isa. 56: 7; the second from Jer. 7: 7.—**Ye make it a den of robbers**, or a cave of bandits (then very numerous in Palestine). What they did here was a sign of the general venality and corruption, a desecration of a place of worship for purposes of gain, cheating, bitter wrangling and reckless swearing. Isaiah adds, 'for all nations' (which Mark retains), alluding to the extension of God's blessings to the Gentiles. This driving of bargains in the place where the Gentiles could come and pray, was a robbery, a contemptuous disregard of the rights and privileges of the Gentiles.—At the beginning of His ministry (at the first Passover) our Lord had performed a similar cleansing, narrated by John (2: 13-17). Such a cleansing was appropriate both at the beginning and the close of Christ's ministry. In the first case it was more the act of a reformer; here it assumes a Messianic and judicial character. In both we find power, holy zeal for the honor of the Lord of the temple; hence an outbreak of passion is inconceivable.

Ver. 14. The blind and the lame, who thronged the approaches to the temple and begged alms from the worshippers (Acts 3: 2). 'A

- 15 ple: and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and
 16 saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus said unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of
 17 babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? And he left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.
 18 Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he

house of prayer' becomes a house of mercy. The making it 'a den of robbers' was unmerciful.

Ver. 15. The children's Hosanna. The chief priests, the heads of the twenty-four courses of the priesthood. Wonderful things. Including all His doings, especially this driving out of the traders.—And the children that were crying in the temple. The Hosannas of the day of entry were kept up by the children, probably only by the children.

Ver. 16. Hearest thou what these are saying? They seem to complain that *children* express a religious sentiment, and contemptuously hint that only children call Him Messiah. Bigotry can always find some trifle on which to ground its objections.—Did ye never read? A pointed rebuke, for He quotes from the Book it was their business to read.—Out of the mouth of babes, etc. From Ps. 8: 2, which speaks of the great God being glorified by His insignificant creatures, with a typical reference to the Messiah. Lange: 1. The praise of the Messiah is the praise of God. 2. The praise of children is a praise which God Himself has prepared for Himself by the miraculous energy of His Spirit. 3. The scribes might fill up the rest: Thou hast prepared praise—'on account of Thine adversaries to bring to silence the enemy and the accuser.' Heubner: 'May God in mercy protect us from such priests and theologians as are offended by children and their harmless songs.' The clergy may do more harm in the church than open enemies.

Ver. 17. And he left them, etc. On Monday evening (see Introductory note).—Bethany was His stronghold, a favorite home of the Prince of peace among three children of peace (Mary, Martha, Lazarus).

Ver. 18. Now in the morning. On Monday morning. To give point to the incident, Matthew unites the two morning walks from Bethany (on Monday and Tuesday).—He hungered. An actual physical want; it may have been occasioned by His leaving Bethany very early in His zeal to purify the temple where He had seen the

19 hungered. And seeing ¹a fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree
20 withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately
21 wither away? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and

¹ Or, *a single*.

abuses as He looked about on the previous evening. Human want and Divine power are exhibited simultaneously. On Sunday He entered Jerusalem amid hosannas, on Monday in hunger. This hunger may symbolize His longings for some better fruit from His chosen people.

Ver. 19. **A single** (lit., 'one') **fig tree**. A solitary one.—**But leaves only**. Mark adds: 'for the time of figs was not yet.' The early fig ripens in June, the main crop ('the green figs') in August. Why, then, should our Lord seek figs in April? The usual explanation: the small green figs appear before the leaves; this tree was in leaf and promised fruit, but had none, and hence would be barren and useless for the whole season. The solitary tree was a figure of Israel set by itself; the leaves represented the hypocritical pretensions to sanctity, the barrenness the lack of real holiness. Applicable to false professors in every age.—**Let there be no more fruit from thee**, etc. Peter (Mark 11: 21) calls this a cursing of the tree, i. e., a condemning to destruction. A miracle of punishment, both a parable and prophecy in action: a 'parable,' teaching that false professors will be judged; a 'prophecy' in its particular application to the Jews. It exhibits Christ as the final judge of that people which a few days afterwards crucified Him. There is no evidence that this affected private property. The miracle is a proof of goodness and severity.—**And immediately the fig tree withered away**. On Tuesday morning it was found to be 'dried up from the roots' (Mark 11: 20). The application to the Jewish people is unmistakable. Both the actual desolation of the land and the judgment of the people are pre-figured. The curse was for falsehood as well as barrenness. Their condemnation was, not that they were sick, but that, being sick, they counted themselves whole.

Ver. 21. **If ye have faith**. Comp. chap. 17: 20; Mark 11: 22. Such faith also could perhaps exist only in Christ Himself, but as it was approximated by the disciples their power would correspond.—**Unto this mountain**. Either the Mount of Olives, the size and exceeding difficulty being thus emphasized, or the mount on which the temple stood. The latter reference suggests that they in their faith

doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done.
 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

CHAPTER 21: 23-46.

The Attack of the High Priest and Elders; our Lord's Victorious Reply.

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as

should bring about the destruction of the Jewish theocracy. Punitive power is spoken of; hence the faith required forbids arbitrariness and also an unforgiving spirit (comp. Mark 11: 25, 26, where the latter thought is brought out). This promise has a spiritual application to all believers, but gives no encouragement to fanatical attempts at working miracles.

Ver. 22. **And all things, etc.** Mark: 'therefore,' showing that the primary application, so far as miraculous power is concerned, was to the Twelve. As applied to all Christians, it is of course confined to prayers of faith (vers. 21 and 22), implying agreement with the will of God, and excluding the abuse of this promise. Christ defines believing and effective prayer to be prayer in His name (John 14: 13; 15: 16; 16: 24).

The Attack of the High Priest and Elders; our Lord's Victorious Reply, vers. 23-46.

TIME. *Tuesday*, in the temple, after the discourse about the fig tree. The events recorded in chaps. 22, 23, took place on the same day; the discourse in chaps. 24, 26, was delivered in the evening as our Lord returned from Jerusalem to Bethany (on the Mount of Olives).

CONTENTS. The assault of the high priests quickly repelled by the question about the Baptist (vers. 23-27): two parables directed against them (vers. 28-32; 33-44); their continued hostility (vers. 45, 46). A third parable (chap. 22: 1-14), which might be included in this section, is placed by itself, because peculiar to Matthew, and probably uttered later (see vers. 45, 46).

Ver. 23. **Comp. Mark 11: 27; Luke 20: 1.—Into the temple,** probably the 'court of the Israelites.'—**The chief priests and the elders of the people.** Mark and Luke add: 'the scribes.' Perhaps a formal delegation from the Sanhedrin, which was composed of these three elements.—**By what authority doest thou these things?** Referring both to His teaching there, and to His cleansing

he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?
 24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one ¹question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.
 25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven: he will say
 26 unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for
 27 all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these
 28 things. But what think ye? A man had two sons;

¹ Gr. word.

of the temple on the previous day. They were the proper persons to challenge His authority.—**And who gave thee, etc.** ‘Even if you assume to be a prophet, who sent you?’ A hint at the old charge of Satanic power. Neither He nor John the Baptist had studied ‘at the feet’ of a great Rabbi, and been solemnly admitted by the delivery of the key of knowledge to the right of interpreting the law. Their authority was from God, not from men.

Ver. 24. **I also, etc.** Our Lord places His authority and that of John together. If they were incompetent to decide in the one case, they were still more in the other. The opportunity to decide aright was given them; but they refused it. An improper question is best answered by silence or by another question.

Ver. 25. **The baptism of John.** As representing his whole ministry.—**And they reasoned, consulted, so as to agree upon the answer.**

Ver. 26. **From men.** This they evidently believed.—**We fear the multitude.** Demagogues who lead ‘the multitude’ astray ‘fear the multitude.’

Ver. 27. **We know not.** A falsehood; as vers. 25, 26, show. Their confession of incompetency was a virtual abdication of their authority.—**Neither tell I you, etc.** Christ answers their thought: *we will not tell.* This refusal is similar to that made when a sign from heaven was demanded (chap. 12: 38 sqq.). The answer assumes their proven and confessed incompetency to decide on the authority of a prophet, and consequently His superiority to their questioning. Such a defeat increased their opposition.

Ver. 28. **But what think ye?** marks the connection with what

and he came to the first, and said, ¹Son, go work to-
 29 day in the vineyard. And he answered, and said, I
 will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went.
 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And
 he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.
 31 Whether of the twain did the will of his father?
 They say, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I
 say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go
 32 into the kingdom of God before you. For John came
 unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed

¹ Gr. *Child*.

precedes and the transition to the offensive. Peculiar to Matthew. This parable assumes the concealment and falsity of their real opinion. Spoken in love, as an invitation and warning, it led to greater enmity.—**Two sons.** The two classes represented are mentioned in ver. 3. Pharisees and sinners, both Jews (not Jews and Gentiles).—**Child.** Affectionate address.—**Go work to-day in the vineyard.** God asks His people to labor every day in the work He appoints to them; but a special work is here meant, namely, 'belief'; see ver. 32; comp. John 6: 29: 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him, whom He hath sent.'

Ver. 29. Some authorities (Cod. B, Lachmann, Westcott and Hort) change the order of the two sons, and read ver. 31 'the latter' for 'the first.' This order seems more natural: the rulers were invited first, the publicans and sinners afterwards, although they went in before.—**I will not.** A rough refusal from rough people, who are represented by the first son (in the text).—**Repented himself.** The Greek word used here and ver. 32 (*μεταμέλομαι*) differs from 'repent' (*μετανοέω*, to change his mind). It signifies regret which may end in remorse and despair, as in the case of Judas (chap. 27: 3), but also in genuine repentance, as in this case.

Ver. 30. **I (will go), sir.** Expression of pride ('I') and hypocritical respect and submission ('sir'). He did not change his mind, but simply broke his promise, and went not.

Ver. 31. **The publicans** (tax-gatherers) were already entering, having listened to John's preaching of repentance, and being disposed to follow Christ.—**Go before you.** This does not imply that the rulers would follow; though it invites them to do so, and some did, as Nicodemus (a member of the Sanhedrin) and Paul, at that time a bigoted Pharisee.

Ver. 32. **In the way of righteousness.** In the way (doctrine) of repentance, turning to that righteousness of life (which the Pharisees professed to esteem); comp. Acts 16: 17, 'the way of salvation.' In the highest sense Christ Himself is the Way (John 14: 6).—**Did**

him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

- 33 Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, which planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went

not even repent yourselves (in the lower sense, much less in the deeper, see note ver. 29) **afterward**. Even after seeing the repentance of these classes, you did not profit by it. Remarkable cases of conversion are designed to be means of influencing others. The proud and hypocritical are always harder to influence than open sinners.

Ver. 33. **Hear another parable**. Comp. Mark 12: 1-11; Luke 20: 9-18. The parable of the Vineyard and the Wicked Husbandmen. The householder is God, the vineyard is the Jewish theocracy, the husbandmen are the Jews, especially the Pharisees, the servants are the prophets, the Son is Jesus Christ. Spoken to the chief priests and elders, so embittered by the result of their attack. This parable points out the crime to which their enmity was leading them, though still spoken in love. 'I have not done with you yet; I have still another word of warning and rebuke' (Trench).—**There was a man that was a householder**, or as in chap. 20: 1, a human householder.—**Planted a vineyard**; the most valuable plantation, but requiring the most constant labor and care; an apt figure of the theocracy (Isa. 5: 1-7; 8: 14; Cant. 2: 15), here representing the Jewish people, as the Old Testament kingdom of God. A secondary application to the external Church in later times is required by ver. 43, where the vineyard ('the kingdom of God') is represented as passing over to others.—**Set a hedge about it**. A hedge of prickly pears, or a stone wall. God had separated His people from other nations, and guarded them from heathen influences by the law (comp. Eph. 4: 15), by external marks of distinction, and even physically by the isolation of Palestine, bounded by desert in the east and south, by mountains in the north, and by the sea in the west. God's special proprietorship and care are plainly emphasized.—**Digged a wine-press** (λινός), where the grapes were trodden out (with the feet). It was a hollow dug out of the rock. Mark: 'a pit for the wine-press' or 'wine-fat' (ὑπολήμιον), i. e., the reservoir of the juice of the grapes beneath the press. This seems to be added to complete the description. Some suppose it represents the altar of the Old Testament economy, or the temple into which the wine of devotion and thanksgiving was to flow; others, the prophetic institution.—**Built a tower**. For the watchman who guarded the vineyard against depredations. In the time of the vintage, used for recreation, no doubt, as in European countries. Such towers are still common in the East (e. g., in Hebron, which is surrounded by

34 into another country. And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his ¹servants to the husbandmen, to receive ²his fruits. And the husbandmen took his ¹servants, and beat one, and killed another, 36 and stoned another. Again, he sent other ¹servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like 37 manner. But afterward he sent unto them his son,

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

² Or, *the fruits of it*.

vineyards), and are of considerable height. A shed or scaffold sometimes served the same purpose. This represents the provision made by God for the protection and prosperity of His people, especially the Old Testament Church.—**Let it out to husbandmen**; probably for a part (one-half) of the fruit, as is indicated by comparing ver. 34 ('his fruits') with Luke 20: 10 ('of the fruit of the vineyard'). The parable of the laborers also (chap. 20: 1-16) introduces the idea of reward. It has pleased God that in His kingdom of *grace* laborers should receive a reward 'of grace' (comp. 1 Cor. 3: 8; 2 Tim. 2: 6). The 'husbandmen' represent the rulers of the Jews (ver. 45); but the people as individuals are included (ver. 43). The vineyard is the people as a chosen nation.—**And went into another country**, not 'far country' (O. V.), there being no reference to distance. The peculiar presence of God, necessary at the institution of the Theocracy (Mount Sinai, etc.), ceased, though His spiritual care did not. A period of human development followed. The same is true, in a secondary application, of the Church since the Apostolic times. Luke adds: 'for a long time,' and these developments require time.

Ver. 34. **The season of the fruits.** Probably no definite time is here represented. God expects fruit after such careful preparation; His people, especially those in official stations, are responsible for the trust committed to them.—**He sent his servants**; the prophets of the Old Testament down to John the Baptist, calling for the fruits of righteousness from the Jewish people.

Ver. 35. **Took his servants, and beat one, etc.** The maltreatment of the servants appears in the history of the prophets (Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah, John the Baptist); comp. Jer. 26: 20-23; 37: 15; Neh. 9: 26; Matt. 23: 29-31, 34, 37; 1 Thess. 2: 15; Heb. 11: 36-38; Rev. 16: 6; 18: 24. God's messengers have often suffered since at the hands of the official personages in the external Church which is apt to become persecuting with the possession of power and the aid of the secular government.

Ver. 36. **Again, etc.** The second sending probably does not refer to any definite time, but sets forth God's long-suffering.

Ver. 37. **His son.** Comp. Mark 12: 6: 'a beloved son,' Luke 20: 13: 'My beloved son.' The sending of 'His son,' whose superiority to the prophets is so distinctly marked, is the last and crowning

38 saying, They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his 39 inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth 40 out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do 41 unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which

act of God's mercy; to reject Him was therefore to fill up the measure of human sin and guilt. 'The Son appears here, not in His character of Redeemer, but in that of a preacher,—a messenger demanding the fruits of the vineyard.' (Alford.) Hence this is the real answer to their challenge of His authority (ver. 28).—**They will reverence my son.** This implies that God is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3: 9).

Ver. 38. **This is the heir.** 'Heir' in virtue of His human nature, Heb. 1: 1, 2.—**Come, let us kill him.** The same words as those used by the brethren of Joseph (Gen. 37: 20, Sept.), whose history typifies the Lord's rejection and exaltation.—**Take his inheritance.** An expression of folly (in addition to the wicked resolve), as though the death of the heir would permit them to hold the possession, while the householder lived. This assumes an unwilling conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus, on the part of the rulers.—Up to this point the parable was history, here it becomes prophecy. In the attempt to maintain their own authority, which He had challenged, by putting Him to death, they foolishly defied God. Some of them might have thought, if we try to kill Him, He will save Himself, if He is the Messiah (comp. the taunt during the crucifixion, chap. 27: 40); but this prophetic word should have banished that thought.

Ver. 39. **Cast him forth out of the vineyard.** This refers either to the excommunication which preceded death, or to the crucifixion outside the gates of Jerusalem (John 19: 20; Heb. 13: 12); perhaps to both, the latter being a result of the former. Mark inverts the order.—**And killed him.** Our Lord here recognizes the fixed purpose of the rulers to kill Him. Yet there is still love in the warning.

Ver. 40. **When therefore the Lord, etc.** The question is asked, that they may be warned and condemned out of their own mouth. Matthew is fuller here than Mark and Luke.

Ver. 41. **They say unto him, i. e., the rulers.** Probably the people joined in the answer, as the parable was spoken to them also (Luke 20: 9). Mark and Luke seem to put these words in the mouth of our Lord.—**He will miserably destroy those miserable men.**

42 shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,
 The stone which the builders rejected,
 The same was made the head of the corner :
 This was from the Lord,
 And it is marvellous in our eyes ?

43 Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation

The order and repetition of the original might be thus reproduced : 'these wretches will he wretchedly destroy.' The rulers, whether wittingly or unwittingly, condemn themselves.*—**To other husbandmen.** An unconscious prophecy (like that of Caiaphas, John 11 : 49–51), if they did not yet understand the parable ; daring hypocrisy if they did. The destruction of the husbandmen points to the destruction of Jerusalem, which is therefore the coming of the Lord of the vineyard (ver. 40), and which was so fully described by a Jewish priest and Pharisee (Josephus). In that case the heir who was killed becomes Himself 'the lord of the vineyard.'

Ver. 42. **The stone,** etc. From Ps. 118 : 22. The 'Hosannas' at our Lord's entry into Jerusalem were taken from the same Psalm. The original reference to the passage is doubtful, whether to David, or more probably to Zerubbabel after the completion of the second temple at the first celebration of the feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8 : 13–18 ; Zech. 8 : 8, 9 ; 4 : 7) ; but it is properly applied to the Messiah. Compare Is. 28 : 16, which Peter cites in connection with it (1 Pet. 2 : 6, 7 ; Acts 4 : 11 ; comp. Rom. 9 : 33).—**The builders rejected.** The rulers of the Jews ('the husbandmen'), whose duty it was to build up the spiritual temple, now addressed in rebuke and warning.—**The head of the corner.** The most important foundation stone, joining two walls. A reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ (as in Eph. 2 : 19–22) may be included, but the main thought is, that the Messiah, even if rejected by the 'builders,' should become the corner-stone of the real temple of God. This involves the important idea, that the 'builders' would be themselves rejected : the parable left the Son dead outside of the vineyard ; this citation, representing Him as victor and avenger (ver. 44), points to the resurrection.—**This head of the corner was from the Lord,** etc. 'This' must grammatically refer either to 'head' or 'corner.' Others understand it as 'this thing,' this exaltation of the despised one.

Ver. 43. **Therefore.** The parable is taken up again. Because

* The original (κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσαι) is a classic phrase of the purest Greek. It is a paronomasia and brings out the agreement of the deed and the punishment. The Vulgate : *Malos male perdet.* The Rheims Vers. : 'The naughty men he will bring to naught.' Campbell : 'He will put those wretches to a wretched death.'

44 bringing forth the fruits thereof. ¹And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces : but on whom-
 45 soever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust. And when the chief priests and the pharisees heard his
 46 parables, they perceived that he spake of them. And when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit ver. 44.

this word of God applies to you, this interpretation also applies to you.—**The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you.** The 'vineyard' means the 'kingdom of God' in all ages, not exclusively the Jewish people.—**To a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.** Not to the Gentiles as such, but to the spiritual Israel (comp. 1 Cor. 10 : 18 ; Gal. 4 : 29), to be constituted mainly from the Gentiles and to grow into Catholic Christendom. Strikingly fulfilled in the first century, but secondary fulfilments are constantly taking place. Privilege abused ever leads to this result.

Ver. 44. **And he that falleth on this stone, i. e.,** the corner-stone, Christ (ver. 42). This verse expands the clause: 'He will miserably destroy these miserable men,' adding the thought that Christ Himself is the Judge, whose coming will result in a twofold punishment.—**Shall be broken.** Probably a reference to Is. 8 : 14, 15. He who runs against or falls over the corner-stone, making Christ a spiritual offence or stumbling-block (comp. 1 Pet. 2 : 8), will be bruised. This is the punishment of the active enemy of the passive Christ.—**On whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as chaff.** Lit., 'it will winnow him.' 'The word is derived from the winnowing-fan by which the chaff when separated from the wheat, and crushed into fragments, is driven away before the wind.' When Christ is the active Judge this utter destruction will be the full punishment of his enemies. Repentance may intervene and avert this final result. There is a reference here to Dan. 2 : 34, 35, 44, the stone in that prophecy being identified with that mentioned in Ps. 118 ; Isa. 8, and with Christ Himself. In addition to the striking fulfilment in the case of the Jewish rulers, there is an obvious application to all who oppose Christ, who take offence at Him as the corner-stone.

Vers. 45, 46. They now perceived, if not before, that the parable referred to them. Their determination to kill Him became fixed (see Mark 12 : 12 ; Luke 20 : 19). Avoiding open violence because the multitude **took him for a prophet**, they welcomed treachery and at last carried the multitude or rather the Jewish mob with them.

CHAPTER 22: 1-14.

The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son.

22: 1 And Jesus answered and spake again in parables
 2 unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened
 unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast
 3 for his son, and sent forth his ¹servants to call them

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son, vers. 1-14.

CONTENTS. A prophetic parable, peculiar to Matthew. The King is God the Father; His Son is Christ; the marriage feast is the union of Christ with the Church, His bride; the first servants are the prophets; the second the Apostles; the armies the Roman soldiers who destroyed Jerusalem; the guests gathered from the highways, the Gentiles.—Mark states (12: 12) that, after the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the rulers 'left Him and went their way;' hence this parable was not spoken directly to the rulers. Ver. 1, however, indicates that it was aimed at their thoughts and designs.

The parable of 'the Great Supper' in Luke 14: 15-24 resembles this one, which is properly called 'the Marriage of the King's Son,' but with essential differences. The former was delivered in Persea, at the house of a Pharisee, and was occasioned by an exclamation of one who sat at meat with Him. The one was a supper given by a man of wealth; this a marriage feast given by a king. In the former case the infinite goodness and grace of the Lord is brought out; here judgment is made prominent.

The two-fold invitation: 1. Preparatory (through the centuries of Jewish history). 2. Peremptory at the time of the wedding (when the New Dispensation was ushered in). The two-fold rejection: 1. by indifference (ver. 5), 2. by persecution (ver. 6). The two fold punishment: 1. on the persons; 2. on the place of the persecutors. The invitation to the Gentiles: 1. without any preliminary (ver. 9); 2. universal (ver. 10). The two-fold sifting: 1. through the invitation; 2. at the feast itself (vers. 11-14).—The excuses of indifference (ver. 5), the speechlessness of self-righteous profession.—The wedding feast implies the offer of the wedding garment.

Ver. 1. Answered. See above.—**Again in parables;** not necessarily, in a number of parables, but in parabolic discourse.

Ver. 2. Unto a certain king. Evidently God: the householder of the former parable.—**A marriage feast for his son.** The word includes any great feast, but here a marriage feast is meant, since the word 'son' must not be thrown into the background. It was Christ's marriage, *i. e.*, with His own covenant people, according to the imagery of the Old Testament (Isa. 54: 5; Ezek. 16: 4; Hos. 2: 19, 20; Song of Solomon throughout; comp. Ps. 45). See also in the New Testament Eph. 5: 25; Rev. 21: 9; where the Church is the Bride, and this marriage feast is the union of Christ and His Church in glory. The union of the Divine and human natures of Christ underlies the other union, but is not prominent here. Believers as individuals are guests, the Church as an ideal whole is the Bride.

Ver. 3. His servants. The prophets, John the Baptist, and the

that were bidden to the marriage feast; and they
 4 would not come. Again he sent forth other ¹servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to
 5 the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his
 6 merchandise: and the rest laid hold on his ¹servants, and entreated them shamefully, and killed them.
 7 But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies,

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

first disciples of Christ up to that time.—**To call them that were bidden.** The Oriental custom was to invite twice: first to the feast generally ('bidden'), then to the beginning of the feast itself ('call'). Those 'bidden' were the Jews. The second invitation was a summons to expected guests, rather than an invitation. Comp. Esther 5: 8; 6: 14.

Ver. 4. **Other servants**, with a plainer message, probably the Apostles and Evangelists, as they proclaimed the full gospel to the Jews from the day of Pentecost.—**I have made ready my dinner** (a morning meal or repast at noon, not 'supper,' Luke 14: 16). The series of wedding feasts began with an early dinner, preceding the actual marriage, which took place in the evening. It refers to the beginning of privileges, which culminate in 'the marriage supper of the Lamb.' Although the guests were the subjects of the King, whom He might constrain, He invites them even with urgency to become guests and friends. **My oxen and my fatlings.** Comp. the 'fatted calf,' Luke 15: 30. Figurative expression of spiritual blessing. Perhaps an allusion to the slaying of the sacrifice, as meat for the feast.

Ver. 5. **But they made light of it.** All had a guilty contempt for the invitation which was manifested, however, in two distinct forms. Some **went their ways**, in indifferent worldliness; others became persecutors of the messengers (ver. 6). All modes of rejecting the gospel, even persecution, are really making light of it. **One to his own farm.** 'His own,' in a selfish spirit.—**His merchandise.** Worldliness is here represented by the two leading occupations of men. The application is, primarily, to the irreligious and careless Jewish people; then to all such in any age.

Ver. 6. **And the rest.** Representing the fanatical rulers of the Jews, the Pharisees.—**Treated them shamefully and killed them.** Literally fulfilled, in the case of most of the Apostles and Evangelists. Indifference often passes into hostility, as the more consistent attitude.

Ver. 7. **He sent his armies.** The Roman armies under Titus

and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
 8 Then saith he to his ¹servants, The wedding is ready,
 9 but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye
 therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as
 10 many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And
 those ¹servants went out into the highways and gathered
 together all as many as they found, both bad and
 11 good: and the wedding was filled with guests. But
 when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw

¹ Gr. *bondservants*.

which destroyed Jerusalem (in 70) were the unconscious instruments of God's (the king's) wrath. Comp. Isa. 10: 5; 18: 5; Jer. 25: 9; Joel 2: 25. **Burned their city.** Jerusalem is meant, no longer *His*, but 'their city.' The destruction precedes the invitation to the Gentiles (ver. 8-10). The final rejection of the Jews and the substitution of the Gentiles took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, although the gospel had been proclaimed to the Gentiles for forty years before.

Ver. 8. **Not worthy.** Compare Paul's language to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13: 46): 'judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life.'

Ver. 9. **The partings of the highways**, or opening of the ways. Places where streets meet, public squares, etc., in the king's city, God's world, not Jerusalem. Some refer it to the outlets of country roads, of highways, in the English sense, applying it to the going out into the distant world to invite the Gentiles.

Ver. 10. **And those servants.** Including all gospel messengers ever since.—**Both bad and good.** All kinds of people, without regard to their apparent moral character. The acceptance of the invitation was (and is) the great concern of the king's servants.—**And the wedding was filled with guests.** The Jews, by their rejection of the gospel, did not frustrate the grace of God. Besides the remarkable fulfilment in the early Christian centuries, there is a reference to the Church as gathered ever since from all parts of the world, of 'bad and good,' and containing some without 'a wedding garment.'

Ver. 11. **To behold (inspect) the guests.** The Pharisees and all legalists think the opening of the door leads to unrighteousness, there follows therefore a hint of the gospel method of righteousness. The coming in judgment (comp. Zeph. 1: 7, 8) is represented as taking place at the feast, and hence not only without terror, but an occasion of joy, for the properly clothed guests. God, not man, is to finally discriminate between the guests.—**Had not on a wedding garment.** Each guest should and could have one. The character of the guests (ver. 10) indicates that the king himself provided the wedding

12 there a man which had not on a wedding-garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the ¹servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few chosen.

Or, *ministers.*

garments, which agrees with Oriental custom. The lesson is not that each guest should take pains to provide himself with the proper habit. The gift of the wedding garment accords far better with the Scripture doctrine of grace. On the other view, poverty would have been a valid excuse, yet the man was 'speechless.' 'The wedding garment' is not faith; that is the putting on of the garment; it is 'righteousness,' given of God in Christ; to be distinguished, but not divided, as imputed and inwrought. Other views: (1) Charity or holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. 12: 14.) (2) Christ Himself; a less exact statement of our interpretation; comp. Gal. 3: 27 (to 'put on Christ'); Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10 (to 'put on the new man'). (3) Baptism; this is not justified by the parable, nor by the general tenor of Scripture. See Lange, *Matthew*, p. 390.

Ver. 12. **Friend.** The word used in chap. 20: 13, and addressed to Judas (chap. 26: 50). It means 'companion,' 'fellow,' without implying friendship.—**How camest thou?** It was a bold intrusion, a despising of the king, to appear in his own ordinary dress. This points to the pride of self-righteousness.

Ver. 13. **The servants,** better 'ministers' or 'attendants.' A different word (*διάκονοι*) from that used before (*δοῦλοι*), referring not to the 'bond-servants' who invited, nor to the guests, but probably to angels, as ministers of judgment (comp. 13: 39).—**Bind him hand and foot.** For secure transfer to his place of punishment. The best authorities omit 'and take him away.'—**Outer darkness.** See chap. 8: 12. There the fate of 'the children of the kingdom' is referred to; here of a Gentile, who entered in, despising the King; their punishment is the same; their sin was the same, the sin of pride.

Ver. 14. **For many are called.** A proverbial expression; see chap. 20: 16. Here the application is more general. The 'called' are all those invited, both Jews and Gentiles.—**But few chosen.** Those who accept the invitation and comply with the condition of putting on the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. The general sense is: Few pass safely through the two stages of sifting. The one man in the parable therefore stands for a large class. It is implied that the guests who stand the test are 'chosen' by God. The 'choice' which comes at the close of the parable was present to the mind of God from eternity.

CHAPTER 22: 15-46.

Three Cunning Assaults overcome by our Lord; His Question, which silences His Enemies.

15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they
16 might ensnare him in *his* talk. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou

¹ Or, Teacher.

Three Cunning Assaults overcome by our Lord; His Question, which silences His Enemies, vers. 15-46.

CONTENTS. The defeated and embittered Pharisees send the Herodians to ensnare our Lord with a political question. The reply sends them away in astonishment (vers. 15-21). The Sadducees now appear with a flippant question, probably intended to provoke a new conflict with the Pharisees. The answer produces new astonishment (vers. 23-33). On the final question of the Pharisees, see note on vers. 34, 35. Our Lord now puts a question, which the Pharisees cannot answer, and thus all His enemies are silenced.—The three assaults, and the final victory. 1. The assault of cunning, a political dilemma. 2. The assault of the scoffers. 3. The theological assault. The victory won on the great theological battle-ground,—the doctrine of the Person of Christ.

VERS. 15-22. **THE TRIBUTE TO CESAR.** **THE ATTACK OF THE PHARISEES AND THE HERODIANS,** attempting to involve Him in political difficulty. Parallel passages: Mark 12: 13-17; Luke 20: 19-26.

Ver. 15. **Then went the Pharisees.** The main element, no doubt, in the deputation which had assailed Him.—**Ensnare him in his talk.** As a fowler ensnares birds. This mode of attack was adopted in view of the complete failure of the last attempt, and was the most artful of all. They expected an answer which would either expose Him to the hostility of the Roman government, or the contempt of His Galilæan followers; in other words, bring upon Him the charge either of political, or of theocratical treason.

Ver. 16. **With the Herodians.** A political party supporting the Herodian family and Roman rule. The Pharisees were opposed to both. An unnatural coalition, but the two classes, though antagonistic, united in opposition to Christ. Luke (20: 20) is more detailed in his account, calling the deputation 'spies' of the rulers. This part was probably assigned to 'their disciples,' as young and unknown persons, who were accompanied by the Herodians. The dispute about tribute, however natural between these two classes, was made for the occasion.—**Master, we know, etc.** This was true, but not truth fully or sincerely spoken. 'The devil never lies so foully as when he speaks the truth.' He makes even the truth lie.—**Teachest the way of God, i. e., the true doctrine, in truth.** This was certainly

17 regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto 18 Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, 19 and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me 20 the tribute money. And they brought unto him a ¹penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image

¹ See marginal note on ch. 18: 28. [Am. Com., *denarius*.]

hypocritical, for both the Pharisees and Herod condemned this Teacher of the truth.—**And carest not for any one.** His independence and sincerity had just been demonstrated, but their acknowledgment of these peculiarities was to tempt Him: as if one party would say, You do not care for the Roman authorities; the other, You do not care for the authority of the Pharisees and Jewish rulers.—**Thou regardest not the person of men.** Art not influenced by wealth, power, or any external appearance. Comp. Lev. 19: 15; Jude 16; Deut. 16: 19; 2 Sam. 14: 14; Acts 10: 34; James 2: 1, 3, 9; 1 Pet. 1: 17.

Ver. 17. **Is it lawful.** According to Jewish law.—**Tribute,** the poll-tax of each individual which had been levied since Judæa became a province of Rome. This was especially obnoxious (more than import and export duties) to the Pharisees who represented the patriotic party and interpreted Deut. 17: 15 ('thou mayest not set a stranger over thee') to mean that the Jews should not pay tribute to any foreign power. Yet the Jews were tributary in turn to Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome.—**Cæsar,** the Roman Emperor; at that time, Tiberius (A. D. 14-37). To say Yes, would alienate the people, who hated the Roman yoke; to say No, would have given good ground for accusing Him to the Roman authorities. Themselves regarding 'the person of men,' the Pharisees did not avow their own belief, that it was not lawful. Their motive now was not their usual hostility to Rome, but hatred of Christ.

Ver. 18. **Their wickedness.** As just explained.—**Hypocrites.** They were such, both in their flattering address (ver. 16) and in their cunning question (ver. 17). Men may rightly carry their religious convictions into politics, and religious questions may become political ones; but when this is the case hypocrisy flourishes.

Ver. 19. **The tribute money.** The Roman coin in which the poll-tax was paid.—**A penny.** The amount of the poll-tax per head. Better, a *denarius*, a Roman silver coin worth about eight pence half-penny, or 16 cents. See ch. 18: 28; 20: 2. The Am. Com. prefers 'shilling' as the usual rendering (instead of 'penny'), except here and in the parallel passages (Mark 12: 15; Luke 20: 24), where the coin is shown, and the original word should be retained.

Ver. 20. **Whose is this image.** The likeness of the ruler at the date of the coin.—**Superscription,** or 'inscription.' The name, etc., on the coin.

- 21 and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things
 22 that are God's. And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.
 23 On that day there came to him Sadducees, ¹ which

¹ Gr. *saying*.

Ver. 21. **Cæsar's.** Imperial money was current among them. 'Wherever any king's money is current, there that king is lord,' is reported as a Rabbinical saying. The standard currency is an indication or symbol of the civil authority; the right to coin usually implies sovereignty.—**Render therefore unto Cæsar, etc.,** to 'the powers that are,' the service due them. Comp. Rom. 13: 1-7. Obedience to this precept would have spared Jerusalem the horrors of war, famine and national ruin, but the subtlest snares they devised for our Lord became their own destruction.—**Unto God the things that are God's.** The tithes and offerings to the temple, faith, love and obedience due to God from every Israelite. Possibly a hint that in denying Christ, they denied the honor due to God, and also a reference to man as bearing the image of God, so that political and religious duties are distinguished, but not divided. The Jews themselves were under tribute to Cæsar, because they had not rendered God His dues. Real religion makes men better citizens, since it enjoins a religious fulfilment of political obligations. The few exceptional cases that arise are to be decided by the principle of Acts 5: 29. Under a free government this religious fulfilment of political duties is essential to preserve the State against anarchy.

This answer is the wisest ever given to a perplexing question, and contains the true theory of Church and State in a nutshell. Both are of Divine origin and authority: the one for the temporal, the other for the eternal welfare of men. Both claim our loyalty and support; but they ought to be kept distinct and independent in their respective spheres, without mixture and confusion, and yet without antagonism, but rather in friendly relation in view of their common origin in God, and their common completion 'in the kingdom of glory,' where God shall be all in all. (See Lange, p. 397.)

Ver. 22. **They marvelled.** Probably both confounded and impressed.

The Question of the Resurrection, vers. 23-33.

Parallel passages: Mark 12: 18-27; Luke 20: 27-40. Luke is fuller.

Vers. 23-33. **THE ASSAULT OF THE SADDUCEES.**

Ver. 23. **Sadducees.** The worldly and rationalistic Jews (the 'Reform' Jews of their day). See note on chap. 3: 5. **Who say.**

say * that there is no resurrection: and they asked
 24 him, saying, ¹ Master, Moses said, If a man die, hav-
 ing no children, his brother ² shall marry his wife,
 25 and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were
 with us seven brethren: and the first married and
 deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his
 26 brother; in like manner the second also, and the
 27 third, unto the ³ seventh. And after them all the
 28 woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose
 wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

* For marg. ⁶ read 'Many ancient authorities read saying.'—*Am. Com.*

¹ Or, *Teacher.*

² Gr. *shall perform the duty of a husband's brother to his wife.* Comp. Deut. 25: 5.

³ Gr. *seven.*

Comment of the Evangelist. But some of the oldest MSS. and fathers read 'saying' (*λέγοντες* instead of *οἱ λέγοντες*), which points to what the Sadducees said at that time.—**There is no resurrection.** Comp. Acts 23: 8, where their views are shown to include a denial of the immortality of the soul, as well as of the resurrection of the body. They either rejected portions of the Scriptures, or explained them away. (There are different opinions on that subject.) They correspond to the Skeptics and Epicureans among the Greek philosophers.—**And they asked him.** A scoffing question, in ridicule of the doctrine and of Christ Himself. This sneering spirit is prominent in Sadducees of every age. It is possible they hoped for an answer that might show sympathy with them. Errorists often think that opposition to their opponents is agreement with them. But truth must always oppose two contrary errors. In this case first the Pharisees, then their antagonists, the Sadducees.

Ver. 24. **Moses said.** Deut. 25: 5, freely quoted; comp. the regulations added in that chapter. Such a marriage was called a Levirate marriage. The object was to preserve families, a matter of great importance in the Jewish economy.—**Seed to his brother.** The first-born son would be registered as the son of the dead brother.

Ver. 25. **There were with us.** Probably a purely fictitious case, notwithstanding this statement.

Ver. 26. **Unto the seventh,** lit., 'the seven.'

Ver. 28. **In the resurrection, i. e.,** in the state after the resurrection.—**Whose wife shall she be of the seven?** The point of the entangling question is now evident. They had quoted the law of Moses, and then given an example of obedience to it, to prove the absurdity of the doctrine of the resurrection. (*A reductio ad absurdum*). Our Lord at once rebukes and denies their false assumption in regard to human relations in the future state.

29 But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.
 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are
 31 given in marriage, but are as angels ¹in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God,
 32 saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not *the God*

¹ Many ancient authorities add of God.

Ver. 29. **Ye do err.** How, is immediately added.—**Not knowing the Scriptures.** 'In that ye do not understand the Scriptures,' i. e., the Old Testament, which they professed to hold, at least in part (the Pentateuch), but free from tradition. That Scripture plainly implies the resurrection.—**Nor the power of God.** His power to raise the dead. Modern Sadduceeism usually knows the meaning of the Scriptures, but denies 'the power of God,' in this as in many other things.

Ver. 30. **Neither marry,** spoken of the man; **nor are given in marriage,** of the woman, since the father gave away the bride in marriage. This relation is not to be re-established in the state after the resurrection, because those raised up are **as angels in heaven.** Comp. especially the fuller answer in Luke 20: 35, 36. There the immortality is brought out ('neither can they die any more'); as there is no death there, there will be no birth there. Personal intercourse and spiritual relationships doubtless remain, but the Jews looked at marriage more in its physical relations. Equality with angels in mode of existence is affirmed, but the redeemed are distinguished from them. This answer opposes another error of the Sadducees, a denial of the existence of angels. Mark the contrast between the angelic heaven of Christ and the sensual paradise of Mohammedans.

Ver. 31. **But as touching the resurrection of the dead.** Proof that the doctrine was implied in the writings of Moses. Luke 20: 37 is against the view that our Lord only makes an authoritative statement without really basing His proof on the passage quoted.—**Spoken unto you by God.** Christ assumes the truth of the book of Exodus. The Sadducees are said to have doubted the authority of the prophetic books which very clearly teach the resurrection (Isa. 26: 14; Ez. 37: 1; Dan. 12: 2); but they acknowledged the Pentateuch; and hence Christ appealed to this; He meets them on their own ground.

Ver. 32. **I am the God of Abraham,** etc. Exod. 3: 6. Spoken to Moses from the burning bush (which was itself a striking symbol of the power of God to preserve what in the course of nature must perish). The name given by Jehovah to Himself, setting forth His self-ex-

33 of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

34 But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a

istence and eternity (Exod. 3: 14, 15), supports the doctrine of our immortality, body and soul. God continues ('I am still,' not 'I was in time past only') in covenant relation to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ('the God of Abraham,' etc.). As these patriarchs had in their bodies the sign of this covenant, the body is included in whatever promise is involved.—**God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.** This saying added by our Lord may be thus expanded: This personal, living God is the God of living persons only; He calls Himself the continuing covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; therefore the statement of Moses involves the truth, that after their death Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living. This is Christ's authoritative exposition of the previous revelation. It strikes at the root of the error of the Sadducees. The patriarchs themselves had a feeling of the perpetuity of their relation to God, and considered themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, desiring a heavenly country (Heb. 11: 16).—The Bible treats man as a unit, and while it implies the separation of body and soul after death until the resurrection, plainly intimates that the blessedness of the future state will be incomplete until body and soul are reunited (comp. especially Rom. 8: 11, 23). Only then will we be like Christ, who has a glorified body (Phil. 3: 21, etc.). Our Lord's answer (comp. Luke 20: 32: 'for all live to Him') may be used as an argument against the unconscious state of the soul between death and the resurrection. Nothing can be inferred from this verse for the immortality and resurrection of the wicked, which must be based on other passages.

Ver. 33. **The multitudes.** The question was put publicly. The Sadducees hoped for an evil effect on the multitudes, but they were **astonished**, as they might well be, at **his teaching**, which confounded them, maintaining the authority of the law, yet shedding new light upon it. It was not so much 'the doctrine' (O. V.), but the mode of teaching and proving the doctrine which created astonishment.

The Great Commandment, vers. 34-40.

Vers. 34-40. **THE LAST QUESTION OF THE PHARISEES.** Parallel passages: Mark 12: 28-34. Comp. Luke 10: 25-28, which refers to a similar, though different occurrence.

Ver. 34. **But the Pharisees, when they heard.** Even their gratification at the defeat of their usual opponents, the Sadducees (Mark 12: 28; Luke 20: 39), did not diminish their enmity. Hence a renewal of the assault.

Ver. 35. **Then one of them, a lawyer, an expounder of the**

36 question, tempting him, ¹ Master, which is the great
 37 commandment in the law? And he said unto him,
 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy
 heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

¹ Or, *Teacher*.

law, 'one of the scribes' (Mark).—**Tempting him.** The statements of Mark (12: 28) and Luke (20: 39), do not indicate any specially hostile purpose on the part of this 'lawyer.' Such a purpose seems to be out of keeping with the hearty response of the 'scribe' and our Lord's commendatory words to him (Mark 12: 32-44). We infer that this man, an intelligent Pharisee, a student of the law, was pleased with our Lord's previous interpretation. But though personally better than his party, he was, perhaps unconsciously, their tool, in putting the tempting question. The great difficulty is, in discovering how it could be a 'tempting' question. Explanations: (1.) Matthew classes it with the attacks, because it was put at that time, not because it was a temptation. This is contrary both to the Evangelist's words, and to his habits as a writer. (2.) The lawyer only desired, by this test, to have his favorable impressions confirmed. But the previous answer had fully sustained the law. (3.) The temptation lay in the distinction of the great and small commandments (see ver. 36). As this was a disputed point, any answer would place our Lord in opposition to some party. [This makes the attack very weak. (4.) The question was designed to draw forth in response, the first commandment: 'Thou shalt have no other Gods before me,' so that this might be used against His claim to be the Son of God. This design was defeated by His adding the second table of the law (ver. 39) as like the first: 'As the second commandment is subordinate to the first, and yet like unto it, so the Son of man is subordinate to the Father, and yet like unto Him' (Lange). This explanation is most satisfactory. The answer thus prepares the way for His triumphant counter-question (vers. 42-45). The seemingly innocent question becomes the greatest temptation. They expected by His answer, either to disprove His Messiahship, or to find in His own words a basis for the charge of blasphemy in making Himself the Son of God. This charge they did bring forward in the council (chap 26: 63-66), and before Pilate (John 19: 7), and it was probably in their thoughts when they put this question a few days before.]

Ver. 36. **Which is the great commandment in the law?** i. e., the Mosaic law. Not merely greater than the rest, but 'great,' as including the rest. Comp. vers. 38, 40. If there was a reference to the disputes of the Rabbins about great and small commandments, the meaning would be: 'What kind of a commandment is great in the law?' but this sense, though literally correct, does not suit the answer so well.

Ver. 37. **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, etc.** Quoted from the Septuagint version of Deut. 6: 5.—**With all thy heart, literally, 'in all thy heart.'** The whole is a demand for supreme affec-

38 This is the great and first commandment. ¹ And a
 39 second like *unto it* is this, Thou shalt love thy neigh-
 40 bour as thyself. On these two commandments hang-
 eth the whole law, and the prophets.

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together,

¹ Or, *And a second is like unto it, Thou shalt love, &c.*

tion. The words 'heart,' 'soul,' and 'mind' embrace all the moral, emotional, and mental faculties, or the harmonious self-consecration of the whole inner man to God. Mark adds: 'with all thy strength,' which refers more especially to the energy and intensity of this whole-hearted devotion.

Ver. 38. **This is the great and first commandment.** 'Great' as embracing all the others; 'first' as preceding the other table in the Decalogue. Our Lord here declares the unity of the first table of the law, its absolute greatness. Hence no part of this table (the first five commandments) can be regarded as abrogated. This unqualified surrender of our whole being to God is to be the aim of our strivings after holiness. God's essential perfections and His manifested grace alike demand this.

Ver. 39. **And a second like unto it is this.** Our Lord thus exalts the second table to an equality with the first. God's moral law has unity: though one table is 'great and first,' the 'second' is 'like unto it.' Pharisaism puts the second in a lower place, thinking that seeming service of God can atone for want of charity to men. But supreme love to God is to manifest itself in love to men. Alike binding, the two are correspondent, not contradictory. The mistake of humanitarianism is making the 'second' 'the great and first' commandment.—**Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** From Lev. 19: 18. 'Man ought to love his neighbor, 1. not as he *does* love himself, but as he *ought* to love himself; 2. not in the same degree, but after the same manner, *i. e.*, freely and readily, sincerely and unfeignedly, tenderly and compassionately, constantly and perseveringly' (W. Burkitt). Cases arise where man ought to love his neighbor more than his physical life, and has done so, sacrificing it for his fellows, his country, and the Church, in imitation of the example of Christ and the martyrs.

Ver. 40. **Hangeth.** Like a door on its hinges. The 'cardinal' precepts have a common principle.—**The whole law, *i. e.*, all the Mosaic economy, and the prophets,** the subsequent revelations of God. Between the law, which they used as a snare, and the prophets, who foretold of Christ, there was no contradiction. On the response of the scribe, see Mark 12: 32-34.

Vers. 41-46. **THE FINAL ENCOUNTER,** in which our Lord by His question respecting the MESSIAH, puts an end to further attempts to 'ensnare Him by a word.' Parallel passages: Mark 12: 35-37; Luke

- 42 Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto
 43 him, *The son of David*. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,
 44 The Lord said unto my Lord,
 Sit thou on my right hand,
 Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?

20: 41-44. Mark and Luke say: 'No man after that' (i. e., the encounter of vers. 34-40) 'durst ask Him any question,' while Matthew, in accordance with his rubrical habits, reserves this remark until after this encounter.

Ver. 41. **Now while the Pharisees were gathered together.** Probably as they gathered after the last attack.—**Jesus asked them.** Fuller and more exact than Mark and Luke, who seem to imply that the question was put concerning the scribes. This probably took place while His audience was changing: the Pharisees were about to withdraw, no longer daring to question Him; and 'the multitude' (Mark 12: 37) beginning to take the vacated places. Comp. chap. 23, which was addressed 'to the multitudes' and 'to His disciples' (ver. 1).

Ver. 42. **What think ye of the Christ?** 'The Messiah.' The Pharisees included the acknowledged interpreters of the Old Testament. Our Lord would prove the insufficiency of their interpretation on a point which they rightly deemed of most importance. What they thought of Him, He does not ask them. Since He has been abundantly proven to be 'the Christ,' the question comes to us in this form, as an all-important one. One answer only can be correct.—**Whose son is he?** Not merely a genealogical question, as our Lord shows.—**The son of David.** A common title applied to the Messiah. A correct answer, but incomplete. This incompleteness is then proven. On this one-sided view of the Messiah, as a descendant of David, the king and warrior, their false political hopes were based. The multitude had used it when they shouted their Hosannas at the entry into Jerusalem (chap. 21: 9-15).

Ver. 43. **How then doth David in the Spirit, i. e., by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; comp. Mark 12: 36: 'by the Holy Spirit.'**—**Call him Lord.** Solemnly designate Him thus, implying superiority.

Ver. 44. **The Lord (Jehovah) said to my Lord (Adonai, David's Lord).** From Ps. 110: 1, entitled, 'A Psalm of David,' probably written after the prophetic address of Nathan, 2 Sam. 7: 12, or on the solemn occasion when he brought the Ark of God into the Tabernacle which he had prepared for it on Zion, 2 Sam. 6: 12-18. This Psalm is more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other passage, as referring to Christ, Acts 2: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 25; Heb. 1: 13;

45 If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?

5: 6; 7: 17, 21; 10: 13. The Jews likewise referred it to the Messiah, since no objection was raised at this point. 'My lord' implies superiority, not only to David himself, but to his own royal race and the people of Israel, or the inquiry would not cause perplexity.—**Sit thou on my right hand** (the place of honor and power), **till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet** (until He is complete victor). This refers to an exaltation exceeding any attainable by a mere man, and to a triumph beyond any political one. The latter thought opposes the false hopes of the Jews, while the whole passage shows the superhuman exaltation of the Messiah.

On the assumption of the Davidic authorship of the 110th Psalm, to which no valid objection can be raised, the argument of our Lord is irresistible. It is an inspired prophecy (for David spoke 'in the Spirit') concerning Christ as the true King and everlasting High Priest. Attempts have been made to reconcile the Lord's explanation with the assumption that Nathan or some other poet wrote the Psalm first with reference to David or some other Jewish ruler, and then in a higher sense to Christ. But we must say, with Dean Perowne (*Book of Psalms*, 3rd ed., II. 295): 'We are shut up to the conclusion that in this lofty and mysterious Psalm, David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, was carried beyond himself, and did see in prophetic vision that his son would also be his lord. Nor is it altogether strange, altogether inconsistent with the course of God's providence, that such a vision should be vouchsafed to one to whom so clear a promise was given that the Messiah should come of his seed, and who, in his "last words," pictured in such glowing terms the Righteous Ruler and the blessings of His righteous reign.' The Jews applied nearly every verse of that Psalm to the Messiah (see the quotations from the Talmud in Perowne, II. 297); but afterwards, seeing the force of the argument of Christ and the Apostles, they abandoned the Messianic interpretation, and applied the words 'my lord' to David, or Hezekiah, or Zerubbabel, or Abraham. But ver. 4: 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,' is applicable only to the Messiah, as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows. David was no more a priest-king than any other Jewish sovereign, and he never interfered with the Levitical priesthood, but pointed to a time when it would be superseded by a higher and universal priesthood typified by Melchizedek long before Aaron.

Ver. 45. **How is he his Son?** The solution is not given here; but plainly preached by the Apostles from the day of Pentecost: the Messiah was Son of David according to the flesh, yet the pre-existent eternal Son of God: the God-man (comp. Rom. 1: 3, 4). If the Pharisees were ignorant of this solution, it was their own fault, since the Old Testament plainly pointed to it. (Comp. the note on the words of Caiaphas, chap. 26: 63, where the two claims are united.) Our Lord's claims involved this: He had been called the 'Son of David;' He had claimed to be the Son of God some time be-

46 And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

CHAPTER 23 : 1—39.

Discourse against the Scribes and Pharisees, concluding with a Lamentation over Jerusalem.

23 : 1 Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his fore (John 10 : 24—38), and they afterwards accused Him of so doing. They at least knew what His solution was, and that He claimed to be both 'Son of David' and 'Lord;' in other words, 'the Son of man,' and 'the Son of God' in the highest sense.

Ver. 46. **And no one was able**, etc. They left Him. Pharisaical Judaism and Christ parted company forever at this point. Henceforth they sought to kill Him by treachery. The next chapter shows the character of those who cherished such hostility against One who claimed to be the Son of God, their own Messiah, and who had proved His claims to be well grounded.

Discourse against the Scribes and Pharisees, concluding with a Lamentation over Jerusalem, vers. 1—39.

CONTENTS. This discourse is peculiar to Matthew, except some parts which appear in Mark 12 : 38—40; Luke 20 : 45—47. It was delivered on Tuesday preceding the crucifixion, although similar sayings (found in Luke 11 : 39—52) were uttered on a previous occasion. The intercourse with the Pharisees had been used by our Lord as a means of warning them. The warning had been unheeded; the intercourse had ceased; the crisis of their meditated crime was approaching. Our Lord therefore turns 'to the multitudes and to His disciples' (ver. 1), and without passion or personal bitterness denounces His enemies. Those who find this discourse too severe, forget that God has revealed Himself in Christ as Holy Love. This awful severity proves Christ's divine mission and character no less than His tender invitations to the sinner. Indeed, it is a part of His mercy, since it warns His sheep against the coming of the wolf, guards us against the Pharisaism of our own hearts, which is so quick to rise against Him who redeemed us. Only one who knew Himself to be free from sin and clothed with Divine authority and power *should or could* utter such a discourse.

The discourse begins with a description of the Scribes and Pharisees (vers. 2—7), which defines and respects their official position, but reproves their inconsistency, disclosing their true motive, namely, the praise of men. Then follows a practical application, enjoining an opposite course of conduct, calling for humility over against the pride which is the root of Pharisaism (vers. 8—12). The more particular and terrible reproof follows (vers. 13—36), containing *seven* (or with the doubtful ver. 14, *eight*) woes against them as 'hypocrites' (the inevitable result of pride) : for hindering men from entering the kingdom of heaven (ver. 13) ; [for using religion as a cloak for covetousness (ver. 14) ;] for proselyting zeal which ruined the proselytes (ver. 15) ; for misguiding the people by their casuistry (vers. 16—22) ; for sacrificing the great matters of religion to minor

2 disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit
 3 on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they
 bid you, *these* do and observe: but do not ye after
 4 their works; for they say, and do not. Yea, they
 bind heavy burdens ¹and grievous to be borne, and

¹ Many ancient authorities omit *and grievous to be borne*.

points of legalism (vers. 23, 24); for external purity joined with spiritual impurity (vers. 25, 26); for external appearance of sanctity joined with spiritual deadness and iniquity (vers. 27, 28); for exalting themselves above their persecuting fathers, in word and act, when they were themselves persecutors, even now preparing to fill up the measure of Jewish iniquity and unconsciously to bear its fearful penalty (vers. 29, 36). Last of all comes a tender lamentation over Jerusalem, predicting its approaching desolation, yet breathing a hope for the distant future (37-39). This was Christ's last public discourse. The 'multitudes' saw Him next, when 'He came forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe' (John 19: 5).

Ver. 1. **To the multitudes, and to his disciples.** Luke (20: 45): 'then in the audience of all the people, he said to his disciples,' His disciples were probably close about Him, the people gathering about them; vers. 8-12 appear to be addressed especially to His disciples.

Ver. 2. **The scribes and the Pharisees.** Joined together, because the scribes or Jewish scholars (theologians and lawyers) were mostly Pharisees. Study of the Scriptures would be of comparatively little interest to the indifferent Sadducees. Theologians, from the nature of their pursuits, are in more danger of becoming Pharisees than Sadducees.—**Sit on Moses' seat**, as judges and expounders of the law. Allusion to the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews. As a lawgiver Moses spoke in the name of God; as judge and administrator he had successors, with authority to explain what he meant, but not to legislate. Under Roman rule, the function of the Sanhedrin, composed mainly of Pharisees, was limited to this.

Ver. 3. **All things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe.** A limitation is implied. Their official position and authority are respected, because the law was still an element in their teaching, though they added their own traditions, which often obscured the word of God (ch. 15: 6). The office did not sanctify the officer. Men's official utterances are often vastly superior to their lives. The verse has a special application to the Jews, still under the Mosaic law, but a wider one in the Christian dispensation. There is always a tendency to Pharisaism in public, especially hierarchical teachers. The extremes of slavish subjection and of revolution, in both church and state, are here forbidden.

Ver. 4. **Yea, they bind, etc.** They so presented the correct law as to make its precepts **heavy burdens**, like loads, packs on beasts of burden (comp. Acts 15: 16). The reference is not simply to the

lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves
 5 will not move them with their finger. But all their
 works they do for to be seen of men: for they make
 broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of *their*

traditions they added, but also the mode of presenting the law itself, as demanding a servile obedience in minute details irrespective of the spirit of the commandment. Imposing such burdens, they did not in the least lighten them by spiritual precept or example. Lange: 'A four-fold rebuke: 1. they make religion a burden; 2. an intolerable burden; 3. they lay it upon the shoulders of others; 4. they leave it untouched themselves, i. e., they have no idea of fulfilling these precepts in spirit and in truth.'

Ver. 5. **But all their works.** Their extensive routine of duty was not really religious, but performed with this motive: **to be seen of men.** Self-righteousness rests on pride, and, inevitably becoming exhibitional, betrays its origin.—**For they make broad their phylacteries.** A Greek word, meaning safe-guards or preservatives, then charms or amulets. The Hebrew term is *tephillin*, or prayers. They consisted of a small box made of calf-skin and containing slips of parchment, on which passages from the law were written; usually worn by the Jews as symbols of devotion, on the left arm and the forehead. The custom was derived from a literal understanding of Exod. 13 : 16, and the passages inscribed were four in number in which frontlets are mentioned: Exod. 12 : 2-10; 13 : 11-21; Deut. 6 : 4-9; 11 : 18-21. Making them broad and conspicuous probably refers to the case or box in which the parchment was kept. As our Lord does not condemn the practice itself, but only its abuse, it has been inferred that He Himself used phylacteries; but this cannot be proven. It is said that the Pharisees wore them constantly, but the common people only at prayers (hence the Hebrew name). When used on the left arm, the leather thong was made into a little knot of peculiar shape (like the Hebrew letter *Yod*) near the bend of the arm, and then wound in a spiral line round the arm and to the end of the middle finger. The minute regulations in regard to phylacteries form a curious confirmation of the belittling tendency of formalism. Similar external badges of professed religious feeling have been used in all ages, from the same motives and with the same tendency, especially crosses and rosaries.—**Enlarge the borders (fringes) of their garments.** Another instance of ostentatious piety. 'Of their garments' is not found in the correct text, but is necessarily understood. 'The border' or 'hem' is the same as that worn by our Lord, ch. 9 : 20, according to Jewish habit. In Numb. 15 : 38, the Israelites were bidden to wear fringes about their outer garment, fastened to it with a blue ribbon, to distinguish them from other nations, and to remind them of their duty to obey the law. The usage may have existed before that passage attached a symbolical meaning to it. The fringe may have been the ordinary mode of preventing the

6 *garments*, and love the chief place at feasts, and the 7 chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the 8 marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi. But be

edge of the robe from unravelling, and the blue ribbon was useful in strengthening the border. The Pharisees, as sticklers for the rigid observance of the law, made these fringes or tassels larger than others to attract men's notice. All these external badges had proper symbolical meanings. Lange: 'Blue was the symbolical color of heaven, the color of God, of His covenant, and of faithfulness to that covenant. The tassels themselves signified flowers, or birds; probably pomegranates, and these crimson, and not blue, as the ribbons were. Thus they were remembrancers that fidelity to the covenant should flourish; or they were tokens that the flower of life was love, and that love must spring from faithfulness to the covenant.' But the Pharisees, however significant their ritualism, murdered Him to whom it pointed. It is a short step from religious pageantry to religious pride. Canstein: 'Pharisaic folly: elegant Bibles and books of prayer, and no devotion in the heart.'

Ver. 6. **The chief place** (τὴν πρωτοκλισίαν) **at feasts.** The place on the middle couch at the upper table (which joined the other two) was considered most honorable. The Jews, like the Romans, reclined at meals on couches, called *triclinia*, each containing three seats. They are still used in the East (hence called ottomans). The O. V. renders 'the uppermost rooms,' i. e., places, in the language of the Elizabethan age.—**Chief seats in the synagogues.** The places nearest the reading desk, where the elders sat with their faces to the congregation. Being in such places (at feasts, in synagogues or elsewhere) is not rebuked, but *loving* to be there. Pharisaism may now show itself in taking the lowest place, if this is done in a slavish obedience to the letter of the gospel, or from a desire to be invited to go up higher.

Ver. 7. **The salutations in the market-places.** The places of public resort, where their importance would be recognized. Salutations of courtesy and kindness in public places are certainly not forbidden. In these days Pharisaical pride may desire some other form of public recognition.—**Rabbi**, lit., 'my great one' (comp. *Monsieur*, *Monsignor*), or 'my teacher.' It was a title of honor given since Hillel's times to the teachers of the law, and corresponds to our doctor. The three degrees in the titles were: 'Rab,' teacher, doctor; 'Rabbi,' my teacher; 'Rabban,' or 'Rabbon,' our teacher, great teacher; 'Rabboni,' or 'Rabbouni,' my great teacher. The title 'Rabbon' was given to Gamaliel and the greatest religious teachers. Jesus Himself is frequently addressed 'Rabbi,' and once 'Rabbouni' (John 20: 16). In the Gospels 'Rabbi' is used as an address to a person, not in the third person (as from the second century on).

Ver. 8. **But be not ye called Rabbi.** This prohibition includes

not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all
 9 ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the
 earth: for one is your Father, ¹which is in heaven.*
 10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master,
 11 *even* the Christ. But he that is ²greatest among you shall

¹ Gr. *the heavenly*.

² Gr. *greater*.

* For "Father, which is in heaven" read "Father, *even* he who is in heaven."—*Am. Com.*

all the manifestations of religious pride spoken of, since it prohibits the pride itself.—**For one is your teacher.** (The word 'Christ' is omitted here in the best MSS., but implied, though some supply 'the Holy Spirit;' comp. John 14: 16, and note on ver. 10). Because One is our Teacher, all are our brethren; hence the prohibition 'against loving, and in any religious matter, using such titles, signifying dominion over the faith of others' (Alford). A literal and particular application of the precept should be made with caution. Such applications may spring from the very pride here forbidden. So long as teachers are necessary in the Church, titles are necessary; but none which imply the right to lord it over the faith of others. Not the title, but the spirit which claims authority in teaching, is forbidden. In any case our addressing others by the usual title is not forbidden; pride taking the form of want of courtesy cannot find shelter here.

Ver. 9. **Your father on the earth.** Another honorary title (*Abba*) in which the scribes delighted. Not a natural father. Titles of respect to the aged are not forbidden. Stephen (Acts 7: 2) began his defence: 'Brethren and fathers,' and Paul too calls himself the spiritual father of the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4: 15), and speaks of Timothy as his son in the faith (1 Tim. 1: 2; comp. Tit. 1: 4; 1 Pet. 5: 13). But Christ forbids honoring any one as an absolute spiritual authority, because this opposes the authority of our Father in heaven. Compare the Papal usage in all its forms of priesthood from the one Father (*Papa*) claiming infallibility, to the bishop ('Father in God') and the parish priest, or 'Father,' claiming infallibility derived from that source. But the prohibition applies to all assumption and pride of authority which is apt to spring from the human heart in all churches and sects.

Ver. 10. **Masters;** better, 'leaders' (*καθηγηταί*, not *διδασκαλοι*). Higher than 'Rabbi,' leaders of the sects, etc.—**For one is your master** ('leader'), **even the Christ.** Hence the disciples were and ought to be called 'Christians,' not by any human name (comp. 1 Cor. 1: 12). As vers. 9 and 10 refer distinctly to the Father and the Son, some have referred ver. 8 to the Holy Spirit; in order to find here a hint of the Trinity. A possible, but improbable, interpretation.

Ver. 11. **He that is greatest among you shall be your servant** (or 'minister,' as the word is translated in chap. 20: 26). Not, 'shall be called.' The Pope, whose usual title is a violation of ver.

12 be your ¹servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven ²against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.³

¹ Or, minister.

² Gr. before.

³ Some authorities insert here, or after ver. 12, ver. 14 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, even while for a pretence ye make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive greater condemnation.* See Mark 12: 40; Luke 20: 47.

9, is called (in proud humility since Gregory I.): 'Servant of the servants of God.' 'The greater among you,' implies a difference among Christians, but not that one is the 'greatest.' The greater have always been those who ministered. In the highest sense Christ Himself came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (20: 28; John 13: 14; Phil. 2: 5).

Ver. 12. **And whosoever shall exalt himself**, etc. A universal rule of God's dealings, including both worlds in its scope. Here it points to the speedy humiliation of the Pharisees. The possession of humility is the first requisite in entering the kingdom of heaven (chap. 18: 3, 4), and the absence of it made the Pharisees the murderers of the King.

Vers. 13-29. **THE SEVEN WOES ON THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.**—Lange compares these woes and the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. This comparison follows the order of some ancient manuscripts, in placing ver. 14 before ver. 13. The best authorities leave out ver. 14 altogether. It was probably inserted from Mark 12: 40, and Luke 20: 47. The variation in the order confirms this suspicion. If retained, ver. 13 should come first, as the main charge including all the others. The omission leaves seven woes, a significant number. The severest words from the lips of the merciful Saviour, uttered not against the people, but the priests and rulers.

Ver. 13. **Woe unto you.** This repeated formula is followed in each case by a reason, derived from evil character and conduct. Sin results in 'woe.'—**Because ye shut the kingdom of heaven**, here represented as a wedding hall, or palace, with open doors.—**Against men**; in their face. This was especially done by so perverting the Scriptures as to prevent others from recognizing Christ, the 'Way,' the 'Door.' Comp. John 9: 22; 12: 42. Their sin was twofold: not entering themselves; and by both example and false teaching, keeping back the people who even now were disposed to enter. This is the chief sin of Pharisaism: by outward ceremonies and false self-righteous teaching, obscuring the simple gospel of Christ, thus shutting the door of the kingdom of heaven in men's faces.

Ver. 14. This verse, though misplaced in the received text, is a part

- 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites !
for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte ;
and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more
a son of ¹hell than yourselves.
- 16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whoso-

¹ Gr. *Gehenna*.

of the word of God and transferred from Mark 12: 40; Luke 20: 47. — **Ye devour widows' houses**, *i. e.*, seize upon the property of the unprotected, here represented by a particular class. — **Even while**; the force of 'and' (in the Greek, *καί*) is best represented thus. — **For a pretence ye make long prayers**. — This probably refers to the eighteen prayers in the worship of the synagogue. The guilt was thus aggravated and greater condemnation is threatened. There are many ways of swindling the defenceless, but to do it with pretended piety, is worst of all. Priestly Pharisaism very early showed itself in securing legacies, so that the widows were left destitute, nor has this form of sin altogether ceased.

Ver. 15. **Ye compass sea and land**, *i. e.*, spare no effort, to **make one proselyte**. Among the Jews there were two kinds of proselytes. 1. Those who embraced the Jewish religion, conforming to all its requirements, 'proselytes of righteousness.' 2. Those who approved of it, accepting some of its rites, without being circumcised, 'proselytes of the gate.' The former class is referred to here. Judaism was designed to diffuse certain religious ideas throughout the world, not to convert the world to Judaism. The law could only proselyte, it could not convert. — **Two-fold more a son of hell** ('Gehenna') **than yourselves**. 'Proselytes' generally become more extreme than their teachers. They must ease their conscience and commend their conversion or perversion by extra zeal. In this case they would become Pharisees, rather than Jews. The usual result of sectarian zeal; for men are more easily perverted than converted; perverts are more violently zealous than converts. The popular Jewish feeling distrusted heathen proselytes, as Christians distrust Jewish converts. There was a proverb that no one should trust a proselyte even to the twenty-fourth generation. But the half proselytes or proselytes of the gate were generally devout seekers after truth and were readily converted to Christianity.

Ver. 16. **Ye blind guides**. Wilfully blind, self-deluded ('fools and blind,' ver. 17), they persisted in leading others astray. The method here spoken of is that of arbitrary distinctions in regard to oaths, perverting religion and morality. — **Who say**. Thus they taught. — **By the temple**. A common oath, comp. chap. 5: 34-37, where kindred oaths are referred to, and all swearing forbidden. — **It is nothing**, *i. e.*, not binding; like the 'mental reservation' allowed and taught by the Jesuits. — **By the gold of the temple**. Either

ever shall swear by the ¹temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the ¹temple, he is a ²debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the ¹temple that hath sanctified the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is upon it, he is ²a debtor. Ye blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? He therefore that sweareth by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And he that sweareth by the ¹temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by the heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

¹ Or, *sanctuary*: as in ver. 35.

² Or, *bound by his oath*.

the gold which adorned it, or the gold in its treasury.—**He is a debtor.** This they regarded as a binding oath. Whatever their reason may have been, the Pharisees thus put the gold above the temple. A sign of covetousness, and of a tendency to exalt church ornaments above the house of God itself.

Ver. 17. **Fools and blind.** The distinction was foolish and false, revealing the character of those making it.—**The temple that hath sanctified the gold.** Any sanctity in the gold came from the temple, and the sanctity of the temple came from God who dwelled therein. No inanimate thing can witness an oath. Hence vers. 20-22 declare that every oath is an oath by God. Pharisees reversed the order of the hallowed things. Their casuistry is rebuked, but neither of the oaths is sanctioned.

Ver. 18. **The altar**; in the temple, the only authorized one.—**The gift.** The offering placed upon it. The order of hallowed things is again reversed (ver. 19). Since all are holy, our Lord declares that no oath can distinguish between them (ver. 20).

Ver. 19. **Ye blind.** The briefer reading is better supported.

Ver. 21. **By the temple.** This oath, which they did not consider binding (ver. 16), is now traced back to God Himself.—**That dwelleth therein.** God came into the temple of Solomon with visible glory (1 Kings 8: 11, 12); nothing is affirmed or denied in regard to the second temple. The Pharisees professed to teach on matters pertaining to God, and forgot the meaning of these very things.

Ver. 22. **By the heaven,** the great temple of God, hallowed by the presence of God enthroned there. The sum of the whole is: Every oath is by God; hence make no distinctions between oaths; 'swear not at all' (chap. 5; 34). These verses really refer, not only

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
 for ye tithe mint and ¹anise and cummin, and have
 left undone the weightier matters of the law, judge-
 ment,* and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to
 24 have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye
 blind guides, which strain out the gnat, and swallow
 the camel.

¹ Or, *dill*. * For 'judgment' read 'justice.' So in Luke 11: 42.—*Am. Com.*

to swearing, but to truthfulness in word and act; they forbid those false distinctions used to palliate the crime of lying.

Ver. 23. **For ye tithe mint, and dill, and cummin.** 'Mint' is said to have been one of the bitter herbs eaten with the paschal lamb. 'Dill,' used like anise, as a sedative medicine and for cooking purposes. 'Cummin,' a low herb of the fennel kind, which produces aromatic seed used as a spice. In Lev. 27: 30, the Israelites were bidden to pay a tithe (tenth part) of the fruits of the field and of the trees, as an offering to the Lord. Other demands were made (Num. 18: 21; Deut. 12: 6; 14: 22-28), exacting in all nearly one-third of the income of each Jew. It was doubtful whether the tithe of produce applied to the smallest garden herbs; yet the Pharisees, in their over-scrupulousness, paid tithe of all eatable produce.—**Left undone the weightier matters.** A striking and distinctive feature of Pharisaism. Scrupulous attention to some regulation of dress, of meat and drink, of outward observance, is often joined with an utter neglect of humility, faith, and charity.—**Of the law.** Comp. Micah 6: 8 ('What doeth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'); Hos. 12: 6; Isa. 1: 17.—**Judgment,** better 'justice,' care for the right; **and mercy,** care for those who are wrong; **faith,** in the Old Testament, faithfulness, fidelity to God, and trust in God; the New Testament idea is similar, but more full.—**These ye ought,** etc. First, the 'weightier matters:' then the lesser ones can be done in the right spirit. Our Lord does not decide the question of minute tithes, but teaches that if, having fulfilled the great duties, their consciences led them to this, not to leave it undone. Faithfulness in what is great, never leads to neglect of what is least. But attention first of all to what is least, leads to neglect of what is great.

Ver. 24. **Strain out the gnat.** A proverbial saying for pedantic scrupulosity in trifles. The Jewish custom was to filter wine and other beverages, in order to avoid swallowing a gnat or any small insect pronounced unclean by the law. Comp. Lev. 11: 20, 23, 41, 42. The same custom obtains among the Buddhists in Hindostan and Ceylon.*

* The O. V. 'strain at' is plainly a typographical error which became stereotyped. All the older English Versions from Tyndale to the Bishops' Bible have 'strain out.'

- 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.
- 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of

—**And swallow the camel**, *i. e.*, indulge in the greatest impurities. The camel was the largest of the impure animals forbidden for food (Lev. 10: 4), as the gnat was the smallest. What was impossible literally, is only too possible figuratively. The reality of Pharisaic sin exceeds the figure.

Ver. 25. **Ye cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter**, or dish. The 'cup' and 'dish' refer to drink and meat, the enjoyment of life. They would give a formal legal purity to sinful gratification. On the Pharisaical washings of pots and cups, see Mark 7: 8.—**But within they are full from extortion and excess**. 'From,' *i. e.*, in consequence of, by means of. The cup and the dish were filled with the gains of avarice and rapacity. Men often fancy themselves religious, because they conform to some standard of outward morality; while they really gain their wealth by wrong-doing, and spend it in self-gratification.

Ver. 26. **Thou blind Pharisee**. 'Blind,' failing to see that the great matter should come first.—**Cleanse first**. Begin with inward purity.—**That the outside thereof may become clean also**. Outward morality is very important; but it naturally follows purity of heart. The former without the latter is only a lifeless form or hypocritical show. Love to God and man is the soul of all genuine virtue.

Ver. 27. **Whited** (*i. e.*, white-washed) **sepulchres**. On the 15th of Adar, before the Passover, the Jews white-washed all burial-places to prevent the passage over them; for contact with a sepulchre occasioned Levitical defilement (Num. 19: 16; comp. Ezek. 39: 15, from which passage the custom is derived).—**Outwardly appear beautiful**. Beside the 'whitening,' much care was bestowed upon sepulchres by the wealthy Jews. **Full of dead men's bones**, etc. Comp. the proper sanitary regulation of the Mosaic law concerning dead bodies (Num. 5: 2; 6: 6).

Alford formerly justified the blunder, and explained: strain at the occurrence of a gnat, but afterwards corrected it, perhaps in consequence of the note in the Am. ed. of Lange on Matt., p. 408.

28 dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are 32 sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up then

Ver. 28. **But inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.** 'Your heart is not a temple of the living God, but a grave of pestilent corruption: not a heaven, but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash—hardly skin-deep' (Alford). 'Hypocrisy' is the whitewash. 'Iniquity,' literally 'lawlessness;' their hearts were really opposed to God's law. As in the case of the sepulchres, such persons are not only impure themselves, but contaminate others; the more easily from the false outward appearance.

Ver. 29. **For ye build the sepulchres of the prophets.** Comp. Luke 11: 47, 48. According to the universal custom of building monuments to ancient and celebrated persons.—**And garnish (adorn) the tombs of the righteous,** those considered especially saintly. 'The prophets,' the higher class, are represented as lying for a long time in unknown, perhaps dishonored, graves. The so-called 'tombs of the prophets' are still pointed out on the Mount of Olives on the road from Jerusalem to Bethany. Besides four special monuments remain to this day at the foot of Mt. Olivet, bearing the names of Zechariah (the prophet, comp. ver. 35), Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and St. James. But 'Absalom's Pillar,' is probably of much later date (see Schaff's *Bible Dict.*).

Ver. 30. **And say.** By the act of building the tombs, and also in words.—**If we had been in the days of our fathers,** etc. Their 'fathers' by natural lineage. The moral relationship they deny, but our Lord affirms it (ver. 31).

Ver. 31. **Wherefore.** 'You acknowledge the sins of your fathers, but hypocritically deny your own, adding hypocrisy to impiety.'—**Ye witness to yourselves,** your own consciences condemning you, **that ye are the sons** (morally as well as naturally) **of them that slew the prophets.** Some find here an allusion to a Jewish proverb: 'One kills him, and another digs his grave' (comp. Luke 11: 47), asserting complicity in guilt; but our Lord assumes that evil moral characteristics are hereditary; therefore those whose conduct did not oppose the false principles and crimes of their forefathers, were partakers in their guilt (vers. 32, 35, 36).

33 the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment
34 of ¹hell? Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city:

¹ Gr. *Gehenna*.

Ver. 32. **Fill ye up then.** In Greek the personal pronoun is emphatic: 'And ye—fill ye up.' Not irony, but a terrible prediction, and a judicial consignment of them to their own ways. Every merciful means of influence had been used before this was spoken. To leave them now to show their true spirit was an act of mercy to others.—**The measure of your fathers.** The measure of their guilt. Each generation added to the guilt until the measure of iniquity was full and God's long-suffering exhausted; then the judgment came in the destruction of Jerusalem. The same law often repeated in secular and ecclesiastical history, i. e., the French Revolution after several reigns of misrule and iniquity.

Ver. 33. **Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, etc.** Comp. the similar language of John the Baptist (chap. 3: 7). That was the first, and this the last recorded address to the unchanged Pharisees. John had said as a prophet: 'who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Our Lord speaks to them as a Judge: **how shall ye escape the judgment of hell**, or, 'how shall ye flee from the judgment' which condemns to hell.

Ver. 34. **Therefore, behold, I send unto you.** Comp. Luke 11: 49. 'Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles.' Here Christ, having already spoken as Judge, says, 'I send.' He is 'the wisdom of God.' The sending of messengers of salvation, the multiplication of privileges, hastens the doom of the hardened. A fact in history as well as the declaration of God's word.—**Prophets, and wise men, and scribes.** Names applied to the Old Testament messengers and teachers; here applied to New Testament messengers, whom Christ as Head of the Church would send. From Luke 11: 49, we infer that there is also a reference to 2 Chron. 24: 19. 'Prophets' probably refers to Apostles; 'wise men' to those specially endowed by the Holy Spirit, like Stephen; and 'scribes' to those mighty in the Scriptures, such as Apollos and other eminent teachers. But there is no necessary distinction, for Paul belonged to all three classes. On the treatment of the Christian messengers, see ch. 10: 17; Acts 5: 40; 7: 59; 12: 2; 23: 19; 26: 11.—**From city to city.** Paul persecuted the Christians from Jerusalem to Damascus, and was himself persecuted from city to city.

35 that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom

Ver. 35. **That upon you may come.** The result would be further guilt, filling up the cup of iniquity; the end would be judgment. The inevitableness, suddenness, power, and grandeur of the judgment is intimated.—**All the righteous blood,** i. e., the punishment for it. Comp. 2 Kings 21: 16; Rev. 18: 24.—**The blood of Abel the righteous.** The first one slain in consequence of the strife between unrighteousness and holiness. 'The blood of Abel' (Gen. 4: 10; Heb. 12: 24; comp. Rev. 6: 10), was a symbol of avenging justice, and even the blood of Christ has a condemning office.—**Zachariah, the son of Barachiah.** No doubt the person of that name, who was stoned to death 'in the court of the house of the Lord,' 2 Chron. 24: 20-22. His dying cry was: 'The Lord look upon it and avenge it' (comp. Gen. 4: 10). The meaning is: from the first murder to the last recorded in the Hebrew canon.—**Ye slew,** i. e., your nation which you well represent in your present hostility to Me.—**Between the sanctuary,** i. e., the temple proper, and the altar of burnt offering, which stood outside of the temple, in front of the porch.

Two difficulties are connected with this verse.

1. The Zachariah mentioned in 2 Chr. 24, is called the son of 'Jehoiada,' not of 'Barachiah.' Solutions: (a) Jehoiada was also called Barachiah (Chrysostom, Luther, Beza); or he was the grandfather of the martyr, since he died at the age of 130 (2 Chr. 24: 15), and Zachariah was specially called to be a prophet after his death (Ebrard). Matthew, it is supposed, mentioned the name of the father. But why not the name of the grandfather known from the Chronicles, and thus avoid confusion? (b) 'Zechariah, the son of Barachiah,' the second last of Minor Prophets is meant (Zech. 1: 1). But of his death we know nothing. (c) A mistake (*lapsus memorix* or *calami*) of the Evangelist (so De Wette, Meyer and even Keil); or more probably of an early copyist. According to Jerome, the Gospel according to the Hebrews read 'son of Joiada' (Jehoiada). This was probably the reading of the original Hebrew Matthew (if such a one existed), and the translator or a copyist, who knew only the minor prophet of that name, corrected the supposed mistake. (So Nicholson, *Com. on M.* 1881, p. 197.) (d) It is more natural to suppose that Christ and Matthew mentioned only the name of the martyr (as in the case of Abel), and that the words 'son of Barachiah' were first a marginal note of a copyist which afterwards crept into the text. This hypothesis would most easily account for the omission of the words: 'son of Bar.' in the Sinaitic (as corrected) and some other MSS., and in Eusebius. It is omitted also in the parallel passage Luke 11: 51 in all MSS.

2. The second difficulty is that Zachariah was, chronologically, not

36 ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye

the last Old Testament martyr. (Urijah was murdered afterwards, Jer. 26: 23). But he was the last mentioned in the order of the Hebrew Scriptures which closed with the Chronicles, and he was by far the best known, in view of the sacred spot of his martyrdom, which was celebrated in the popular legends and in the Talmud and commemorated by the so-called 'Tomb of Zachariah' in the Kedron Valley.—As regards the application (of Origen) to Zachariah, the father of the Baptist, it is out of question; for the story of his martyrdom in the temple is only recorded in the apocryphal Gospel of James. Nor can we admit (with Hug) any prophetic reference to the murder of 'Zacharias, the son of Baruch' which was committed by two of the Zealots in the temple shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* IV. 5. § 4). For our Lord refers to past generations ('slew'), and the identity of Baruch and Barachiah is doubtful. But the fact mentioned by the Jewish historian is remarkable and may have added to the confusion of names.

Ver. 36. **All these things shall come upon this generation.** Referring to the fearful calamities to come upon the Jewish people culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, about forty years afterwards. The punishment was a national one, to be executed in this world upon that generation, 'as the last in a progressive series of such hypocrites and persecutors.' National judgments are often thus delayed and suddenly executed. But the individuals of the last generation received no more than their just due, nor of the former less: since another world completes the individual punishment. The Jews were the nation chosen for the manifestation of God's mercy, and having repeatedly rejected Him and His messengers, this generation which rejected His Son became the vessels of His wrath.

Vers. 37-39. Luke (13: 34, 35) inserts this lamentation at an earlier point of the history. It was probably uttered twice, but if but once, on this occasion, when it was peculiarly fitting both as a conclusion of the preceding denunciation and as an introduction to the following prediction. Comp. also Luke 19: 41-44, where we find another lamentation over the city on His triumphant progress towards it.

Ver. 37. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** A mighty emotion of compassion follows the stern language of denunciation; both are aroused by guilt: in the one case, that of the blind misleaders; in the other,

38 would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you ¹deso-
 39 late. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me hence-
 forth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the
 name of the Lord.

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *desolate*.

that of the misled people. The Greek retains here the Aramaic form ('Ιερουσαλήμ instead of 'Ιεροσόλυμα), 'as though the very syllables had impressed themselves on the hearers.'—**That killeth the prophets.** Habitually does so. The crimes against God's messengers in every age, past, present or future, are included.—**How often would I have gathered.** Our Lord speaks of His own merciful desires in the past, in the Old Testament times and in His ministry on earth. A hint that He had often visited Jerusalem, as we learn from the Gospel of John.—**Thy children,** the inhabitants, and in a certain sense all the Jewish people.—**As a hen.** The Greek is generic; 'as a bird gathered her brood.' To protect from impending destruction. Comp. Deut. 32: 11 (where the Lord compares His own dealings to that of an eagle bearing the young on her wings); Ps. 17: 8; 36: 7; 57: 1; 61: 4; Is. 31: 5. Malachi 4: 2; and Matt. 24: 28. The figure of a hen was applied by the Rabbins to the Shekinah, gathering the proselytes under the shadow of its wings.—**But ye would not!** The matter was decided, and that by the free will of the people themselves. As a whole the city had rejected, and would yet more cruelly reject Him; though many individuals might be saved. Here, as throughout the Scriptures, man's freedom and responsibility are emphatically assumed, and directly combined with the fact of God's sovereignty manifesting itself in purposes which He predicts and which *must* be fulfilled. To deny the former would be to despise our Lord's tears over Jerusalem; to forget the latter would be to doubt His power to save unto the uttermost.

Ver. 38. **Your house,** the temple, which is no longer God's house, but yours or Jerusalem with the temple. Comp. Ps. 49: 28 (Sept.); Luke 21: 24. **Desolate,** a spiritual ruin to be followed by temporal ruin. Our Lord shortly afterwards (chap. 24: 1) left the temple, as a sign that this had taken place. The word 'desolate' is omitted in some of the best MSS. Westcott and Hort put it on the margin.

Ver. 39. **Ye shall not see me henceforth.** A solemn declaration of His withdrawal from His ministry among them. After this He taught only His own people.—**Till ye shall say,** etc. This refers to the future conversion of the Jews (comp. Rom. 11: 25-32).—**Blessed is he that cometh,** etc. Quoted from Ps. 118: 26. Our Lord had been thus greeted by His followers in a momentary outburst of enthusiasm as He entered the city (chap. 21: 9), but Jerusalem said: 'Who is this?' The heavy judgments would inevitably come, but hope still remains, and will be fulfilled at the second Advent when the Lord shall

CHAPTER 24: 1-51.

The final Departure from the Temple; the prophetic Discourse on the Mount of Olives.

24: 1 AND Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to

be welcomed by all the true Israel of God. Others refer the prediction to the conversion of the remnant of the Jews after the day of Pentecost when Christ spiritually reappeared in His church. (So Keil.) But this is inconsistent with ver. 39 which points to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The final Departure from the Temple; the prophetic Discourse on the Mount of Olives, vers. 1-51.

ORDER OF EVENTS. Chapters 24 and 25 contain a prediction on the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the world, and parables illustrating this prediction, and enforcing its lessons. After the last public discourse (chap. 23) our Lord did not at once leave the temple, but (Mark 12: 41-44; Luke 21: 1-4) sat quietly in the court of the women, looking at those casting in their gifts, to find an opportunity for praising one act of real religion amidst all the hypocrisy He had just denounced. (Reformers may find a lesson here.) In perfect quietude of spirit, not in haste nor anger, He finally forsook 'His own' who received Him not. As He was finally 'departing' (ver. 1), and ascending the opposite Mount of Olives (ver. 3), His disciples pointed out the magnificence of the various structures composing the temple. This brought out a prediction of its entire destruction. Passing out towards Bethany, He paused upon the Mount of Olives, looking towards the temple, as if still moved with compassion. His disciples (or more exactly four of them) inquired of Him, as to the time and signs of His coming. Chap. 24 is the answer, not yet fully understood. Chap. 25 was spoken on the same occasion.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 13: 1-37; Luke 21: 3-36. This chapter refers both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the second coming of Christ, one prophecy respecting two analogous events. This we may call the panoramic view of the prophecy, and it may be applied to other passages (in Revelation and elsewhere). The prophetic vision beholds the future as one picture where what is distant in space is brought into close proximity. The divine mind sees the end from the beginning. The destruction of Jerusalem foreshadows the judgment of the world. Reasons: 1. An exclusive reference to either the destruction of Jerusalem, or the second coming of Christ involves insuperable difficulties. 2. The disciples asked about both, joining them in time (ver. 3). The answer therefore refers to both, joining them in character, not necessarily in time. The disciples needed instruction on both points, for immediate and more remote guidance. 3. The preceding discourse plainly points to the destruction of Jerusalem, but chap. 25 and vers. 42-51 of this chapter, apply exclusively to the Christian dispensation. Great care is necessary in deciding what refers to each of the two sets of events (or how far the analogy holds good). Alford and others seem correct in holding, that the two interpretations run parallel as far as ver. 28, the judgment upon the Jewish Church being the predominant thought; after that the Lord's second coming is pro-

2 shew him the buildings of the temple. But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

minent, until in the close of the chapter it is exclusively treated of. Concerning this nothing definite as to time is made known (see ver. 36), and the part that Jerusalem will sustain is and must be unknown, since prophecy is rarely designed to enable us to foretell future events.

Lange (see his *Com.* p. 418) regards both chapters as exhibiting 'the judgments of His coming in a series of cycles, each of which depicts the whole futurity, but in such a manner that with every new cycle the scene seems to approximate to, and more closely resemble, the final catastrophe.'

Those eschatological discourses of our Lord furnish a strong argument for the early composition of the synoptical Gospels prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. Had they been written afterwards they would have hinted at the fulfilment.

Ver. 1. Went out (departed) from the temple and was going on his way (according to the better reading), down the valley of the Kedron and up the Mount of Olives (ver. 3), from which He had the best view of the opposite temple founded on a foundation of massive stones and rising like a mountain of dazzling white marble with golden roof and pinnacles. The next words (ver. 2) seem to have been uttered before He went down the valley, perhaps in the court of the Gentiles, all the rest (vers. 3-46; Mark 13: 3) on the Mount of Olives while He sat. He never returned to the temple, and henceforth it was virtually desolate. The Apostles returned, holding out mercy still; the last rejection recorded is that of Paul (Acts 21: 27 sqq.), who was even accused of polluting it.—**His disciples.** Mark (13: 1): 'one of his disciples.' **To shew him the buildings of the temple, i. e.,** all the structures in the inclosure, especially the stones (comp. Mark and Luke), as **His answer** (ver. 2) indicates. The columns and marble blocks of enormous size (some of them forty-five cubits long) could be seen from the court of the Gentiles; so also the great number of outer structures, some of them still in process of erection. The latter fact gives additional point to the prediction. The temple of Herod which is here meant, was begun B. C. 17 and finished under Herod Agrippa II., A. D. 64, and destroyed by the Romans A. D. 70.

Ver. 2. All these things? Mark 13: 2: 'these great buildings.'—**Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another.** This prophecy was uttered in a time of profound peace, when the possibility of the destruction of such a magnificent work of art and sanctuary of religion seemed very unlikely; but it was literally fulfilled forty years afterwards. Imposing ruins of the temples of Karnak, Luxor, Balbec, Palmyra, and on the acropolis of Athens still remain the admiration of the world, but the temple of

3 And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy
4 ¹coming, and of ²the end of the world? And Jesus

¹ Gr. *presence*.

² Or, *the consummation of the age*.

Jerusalem has utterly disappeared from the face of the earth, and a Mohammedan Mosque occupies its place. The Jewish priest, Josephus, had to tell from his own observation the sad tale of its destruction, and his History of the Jewish War is a striking commentary on this prophecy of Christ, whom he does not even mention in his works. For the famous passage in his *Archæol.* XVIII. 3, § 3, is probably an interpolation or corruption. He reports that Titus ordered the whole city and the Temple to be dug up and levelled, (with the exception of the three towers of Herod and part of the western wall) so that visitors could hardly believe that it was ever inhabited (*Jewish War*, VII. 1). What still remains are only the substructures, drains, underground passages and what are called 'Solomon's Stables.' In the reign of Julian the Apostate (360) the Jews, encouraged by him, repeatedly attempted to rebuild the temple, but utterly failed.

Ver. 3. **The mount of Olives.** Opposite the temple. The siege of Jerusalem began from this place and the adjoining mount Scopus, and at the same season of the year. It was from the side of this mount, that our Lord two days before had prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19: 43, 44).—**The disciples.** Mark (13: 3): 'Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,' the four fishermen first called and first named in all the lists, the confidential disciples.—**When shall these things be?** The desolation and destruction just prophesied.—**The sign of thy coming,** (*parousia*, 'presence,' 'appearance,' here for the first time in the N. T.), **and the end of the world?** ('age,' *αἰών*, not the universe, *κόσμος*). They identified these, and joined them with the destruction of Jerusalem. See Dan. 9: 27. As these disciples had been told most fully of His death (comp. chap. 17: 9 sqq.), they probably meant a coming or return after death, to usher in the end of the world, i. e., the end of the former dispensation of things, and to inaugurate the 'future world' or 'age,' i. e., the Messianic dispensation. Being Jews, they would not think of the destruction of the holy city without a personal presence of the Messiah in its stead. As the two events were blended in their minds, they are not sharply distinguished in the answer. On the 'coming' or advent (the *parousia*) of our Lord, see 1 Thess. 2: 19; 3: 13; 4: 15; 5: 23; 2 Thess. 2: 1, 8, 9; 1 Cor. 15: 23; Jas. 5: 7, 8; 2 Pet. 1: 16; 3: 4, 12; 1 John 2: 28.

Ver. 4. **See that no man lead you astray.** The admonition is prophetic, intimating the perplexity of the whole subject. A cau-

answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man
 5 lead you astray. For many shall come in my name,
 saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray.
 6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see
 that ye be not troubled: for *these things* must needs
 7 come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation
 shall rise against nation, and kingdom against king-
 dom: and there shall be famines and earthquakes in

tion to Christians regarding specific teaching about these unfulfilled predictions.

Ver. 5. **Come in my name, as the Messiah.** The Messianic hopes of the Jews were at fever-heat, as the destruction of their holy city drew near; many enthusiasts appeared as seducers of the people, and awakened false expectations. It is not known that they claimed the authority of the promised Messiah. Bar-Cochba (the 'son of the star,' comp. Num. 24: 17), made such a claim; but he appeared before the second destruction of Jerusalem under Hadrian, A. D. 120. Christ speaks here of the general signs of the end of the world. 'Every man who pretends to assume the place of Christ is a false Christ.'

Ver. 6. **Of wars and rumors of wars.** The primary reference is to the Jewish war which began A. D. 66, and lasted four years till the destruction of Jerusalem. During this period there were unusual commotions among the Jews in all countries, and in Rome, too. It is also a prediction of unexampled convulsions before the second coming of Christ. 'Rumors of wars' are sometimes more intimidating and unsettling to the minds of men than actual war. (See Lange on *Matthew*, p. 423, note.)

Ver. 7. **Nation shall rise against nation, etc.** Primarily, national uprisings of the Jews; then, wars of races, political revolutions, migrations, etc. Even the times preceding the dissolution of the Roman Empire have not exhausted this prediction.—**Famines and earthquakes in divers places.** A famine is prophesied in Acts 11: 28; others are mentioned by Latin historians. Five great earthquakes occurred in thirteen years. The best authorities omit: 'and pestilences.' See Luke 21: 11, from which it is taken. They usually accompany famines. In the Greek the words for the two (*limos* and *loimos*) sound almost alike. Tacitus and Suetonius mention a pestilence under Nero, which swept off 80,000 persons in Rome (A. D. 65). There is scarcely a period in history so full of public convulsions and calamities as that preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. The heathen historian Tacitus describes it in his terse style as 'full of calamities, horrible with battles, rent with seditions, savage even in peace itself.' (*Opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox praeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam paces ævum.* Hist. I. 2. Comp. his *Annals*, and Josephus, *Jewish War*.) As regards the wider fulfilment:

8 divers places. But all these things are the beginning
 9 of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribu-
 lation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all
 10 the nations for my name's sake. And then shall many
 stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall
 11 hate one another. And many false prophets shall
 12 arise, and shall lead many astray. And because ini-

'The passage combines in one view the whole of the various social, physical, and climatic crises of development in the whole New Testament dispensation' (Lange).

Ver. 8. **The beginning of travail, i. e., birth-pangs.** The physical woes are the basis of the greater succeeding moral woes. 'The death-throes of the Jewish state precede the "regeneration" of the universal Christian Church, as the death-throes of this world the new heavens and new earth' (Alford).

Ver. 9. **Then, i. e., 'during this time,' not 'after this.'** See Luke 21: 12.—**Shall they deliver you up, etc.** Soon literally fulfilled. But it may now be referred to the spirit of persecution, always latent in the world, and to break out in the last times.—**Hated of all the (heathen) nations.** (Mark and Luke: 'of all men;' comp. chap. 10: 22.) When Paul came to Rome, the sect of the Christians was 'everywhere spoken against' (Acts 28: 22). The heathen historian Tacitus speaks of the early Christians as hated for their crimes. Comp. 1 Pet. 2: 12.—**For my name's sake.** This hatred has not ceased; it will probably manifest itself anew in startling form.

Ver. 10. **Then shall many stumble, or 'fall away.'** The Apostles understood this of the first century; see the repeated warnings against apostasy in the Epistles. The fulfilment will culminate in the last days.—**Deliver up one another, i. e., to tribunals, to heathen magistrates, as was the case in apostolic times and in the Neronian persecution of 64, as described by Tacitus (Ann XV. 44).** A natural development of apostasy, then, and to be repeated before 'the end' comes.—**Hate one another.** Whenever apostasy occurs, this recurs, since this is the opposite of Christian love. The great apostasy (3 Thess. 2: 3) will thus manifest itself.

Ver. 11. **Many false prophets.** Not false Messiahs as in ver. 5, but false teachers. In the apostolic times such teachers appeared, first proclaiming strict adherence to the law, and afterwards a kind of antinomianism, or 'lawlessness.' Comp. Gal. 1: 7 and the later epistles (1 John 2: 12, 18; 4: 1; 2 Pet. 2: 1; 1 Tim. 4: 1). In the Jewish wars fanatics and impostors deluded the people with predictions of deliverance up to the capture of the city by Titus (Josephus VI. 5, § 3). The same moral phenomena will mark an analogous period.

Ver. 12. **Because iniquity (or 'lawlessness,' as in 2 Thess. 2: 7) shall be multiplied.** A horrible state of immorality prevailed in

quity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall
 13 wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same
 14 shall be saved. And ¹this gospel of the kingdom
 shall be preached in the whole ²world for a testimony
 unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.
 15 When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation,

¹ Or, *these good tidings.*

² Gr, *inhabited earth.*

the first century, especially in Judæa between 60 and 70. False teachers endeavored to join it with Christian profession; the inevitable result was a coldness, a dying out of Christian love.—**The love of the many** (the mass) **shall wax cold.** The entire fulfilment will come in with the great apostasy (2 Thess. 2: 3-8). The principle is: wickedness destroys love; immorality eats out the heart of Christianity.

Ver. 13. **To the end.** The Christians were saved from the horrors attending the destruction of Jerusalem. and fled to Pella. But the principle is a general one. For the individual, 'the end' is the day of his death; for the Church, it is the Advent of Christ, the end of all things. The last sense is the more important one, giving character to the others. Over against the apostasy of 'the many' (ver. 12) we have the faithfulness of the few, in spite of false teaching (ver. 11), in spite of prevailing wickedness (ver. 12), an endurance in love.

Ver. 14. **This gospel of the kingdom, etc.** The preaching of the gospel throughout the Roman world preceded the end of the Jewish state; the promulgation of the gospel throughout the whole world will be the sign of the end of this world.—**For a testimony unto all the nations.** To them, if they accept; *against* them, if they reject it. In either case, the duty of sending the gospel everywhere remains (chap. 28: 19). The universal extension of missions, no less than the great apostasy, is a sign of the approach of our Redeemer. This prediction stimulated the Apostles, and should stimulate us.

Vers. 15-22. These verses certainly refer directly, if not exclusively, to the destruction of Jerusalem. Another fulfilment is probable, in accordance with the parallel lines of prophecy we have traced in the preceding section (vers. 5-14). But precisely because the details are so minute, we must be cautious in applying it to the final catastrophe.

Ver. 15. **When therefore ye see.** This direct address points to a speedy fulfilment, whatever may be the ulterior reference. 'Therefore' takes up the thought of ver. 9, where their personal persecution had been spoken of.—**The abomination of desolation which was spoken of by** (or 'through') **Daniel the prophet.** Abomination which works desolation or devastation, as described by Daniel 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 11. Most of the Jews applied the original prophecy to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes (comp. 1 Macc. 1: 54), who set up there an idol statue of Jupiter.

which was spoken of ¹by Daniel the prophet, standing in ²the holy place (let him that readeth understand),
 16 then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the moun-
 17 tains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to

¹ Or, *through*.

² Or, *a holy place*.

Our Lord points to a fulfilment, then future, probably to the Roman eagles, so hateful to the Jews, and worshipped as idols by the soldiers, the standards of those who desecrated and desolated the temple. This is favored by the addition in Luke's account (21: 20): 'when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies.' Others refer it to some desecration of the temple by the Jewish Zealots, under the pretence of defending it, which occurred at the same time with the approach of the first Roman army (under Cestius, A. D. 67) against Jerusalem, and is described by Josephus. This makes Luke's account refer to an external sign, and those of Matthew and Mark to the *internal* sign, an abomination committed by the Jews themselves, which should fill up the cup of their iniquity.—**In the holy place.** Mark: 'where it ought not;' Jerusalem was 'the holy city' (chap. 4: 5), and the temple the most holy place in that city. Josephus (*Wars*, VI. 6, § 1) reports that the victorious Romans 'brought their ensigns into the temple, and placed them over against the eastern gate; and *there they offered sacrifices to them*, and with the loudest exclamations proclaimed Titus emperor.' Again, a literal fulfilment.—**Let him that readeth understand**, consider, ponder. It is the echo of the counsel of the angel Gabriel to Daniel, 9: 23. Similar to the phrase: 'He that hath ears, let him hear.' (*Nota bene*.) A remark of the Lord Himself not a parenthetical insertion of the Evangelist, which would be without example and imply a rather presumptuous selection. Mark (13: 14) has the same counsel. Such an understanding was very important for the early Christians. An ulterior reference to 'the man of sin' (2 Thess. 2: 4) is probable. It will be understood by Christians when necessary for their safety.

Ver. 16. Flee unto the mountains. A place of refuge and safety. The Christians, warned by 'a certain oracle' (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III. 5), or by an angel (Epiphanius), more probably by the remembrance of this very discourse, fled in the early part of the war beyond the Jordan and over the hills of Gilead to Pella, and were spared the horrors of the siege and destruction.

Ver. 17. On the house-top. The flat roofs of eastern dwellings were a favorite place of resort.—**Not go down.** Some suppose this is a command to flee along the flat house-tops to the city wall, or to go down by the outer stairs as a quicker way. What is distinctly forbidden is to go down to take out the things that are in his house. Extreme haste is enjoined, as the least delay may prove fatal. There is probably an allusion to the flight of Lot from Sodom (comp. Luke 17: 32).

- 18 take out the things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloke.
 19 But woe unto them that are with child and to them
 20 that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath:
 21 for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no,

Ver. 19. **Woe unto them**, etc. 'Alas for them.' The language of pity and compassion for mothers who were thus delayed. The same tenderness of sympathy shows itself in the words to the daughters of Jerusalem, Luke 23: 28, 29.

Ver. 20. **Pray ye**. The trying events were distinctly predicted, yet prayer is just as distinctly enjoined.—**Not in the winter**, when the swollen streams, long nights, and rain and cold would make the flight more disagreeable and difficult.—**On a Sabbath**. On the Jewish Sabbath. Mentioned as another obstacle to travel by Matthew alone. On that day the gates of the cities were usually closed (Neh. 13: 19-22); besides travelling on that day would expose them still more to Jewish fanaticism. The Jewish Christians, up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, observed the Jewish Sabbath, and might scruple to travel more than the Sabbath day's journey (2,000 cubits, about an English mile). Our Lord's anxiety is not for the observance of the Jewish Sabbath, but for His people.

Ver. 21. **Great tribulation**, etc. Josephus, a Jew by birth and education, but a Roman in sympathies, in describing the siege of Jerusalem, almost echoes the words of our Lord. The siege began at the time of the Passover feast, when the city was crowded with pilgrims from all parts of the world. Internal dissensions combined with scarcity of food to multiply the horrors. One woman of rank, named Mary, too, killed and roasted her own babe (comp. Deut. 28: 53, 56, 57), and was discovered only by those who sought to rob her of food: yet even they shrank back at the sight. The resistance of the Romans was fanatical, despite the bloody discord within the city. When at last it was successfully stormed by Titus, Aug. 10, 70, the rage of the Roman soldiers, raised to the utmost by the stubborn resistance, was permitted to wreck itself unchecked upon the inhabitants. The sword made the whole city run with blood; while wholesale crucifixions of Jewish prisoners by way of jest were very frequent. *Eleven hundred thousand* persons perished in the siege, and *one hundred thousand* were sold into slavery, or distributed throughout the Roman provinces to be destroyed by wild beasts. The fall of Jerusalem was the fall of the theocracy.—**Such as hath not been from the beginning**. Josephus says (*Wars*, V. 13, § 4 and 5) that 'all miseries that had been known from the beginning of the world fall short' of the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem.—**Nor ever shall be**. This seems to indicate

22 nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved : but for the
 23 elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or,
 24 Here ; believe ¹it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; so as to lead astray, if possible, even

¹ Or, him.

that nothing analogous will occur again. But ver. 22 is so closely connected with this verse, that a double reference is probable even in vers. 15-21, which were most strikingly fulfilled in the first century. The final application would be to a *sudden catastrophe* before the coming of our Lord, which His people will be enabled to avoid, by recognizing the appearance of the signs He has given. The final catastrophe is more plainly indicated in the subsequent part of the chapter.

Ver. 22. **Except those days had been shortened.** (A prophetic past tense.) 'Shortened,' cut off, curtailed, reduced in number (not in duration). The want of preparation for the siege, the divisions among the Jews, the haste of the Romans, and other causes combined to shorten the siege of Jerusalem, so that the Christians in the neighboring place of refuge were not so much exposed. But the strong language of the verse and the prophecy of Daniel (chap. 12 : 1) which is here alluded to, point to a providential interposition. Even Titus acknowledged the hand of God in his victory after a siege of less than five months (Joseph. Wars VI. 9, § 1.).—**No flesh**, no mortal man.—**Saved** from death. No reference to eternal salvation.—**For the sake of the elect**, those who are believers in Christ at the time, and those who would become believers, the remnant of grace, the true Israel of God ; comp. Rom. 11 : 5, 7.

Ver. 23. **Then.** During the great tribulation (ver. 21), or from that time on to the parousia (ver. 30).—**If any man shall say unto you**, etc. This indicates that the disciples *then* expected that the second Advent would immediately follow ; and was first of all a caution against impostors. Josephus speaks of many 'deceivers,' but not of Messianic pretenders. But he may not have told the whole truth. He himself perverted the Messianic hopes of his nation by regarding the heathen emperor Vespasian as a sort of Messiah.—**Believe it** (or 'him') **not**. This phrase furnishes no argument against the visible personal coming of Christ, which seems to be taken for granted throughout.

Ver. 24. **False Christs.** While this may refer to the impostors of the first century, it now points to 'Antichrist,' or the many 'anti-christs' (1 John 2 : 18), constantly arising.—**False prophets.** Such arose among the Jews, but have arisen ever since.—**Show great signs and wonders**, in appearance probably, or 'lying wonders.'

- 25 the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand.
 26 If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the
 27 inner chambers; believe ¹ it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the ² coming of the Son of man.
 28 Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the ³ eagles be gathered together.

¹ Or, them.

² Gr. *presence*.

³ Or, *vultures*.

See 2 Thess. 2: 9-12.—**So as** (the tendency and purpose) **to lead astray, if possible**, implying that it is not, **even the elect**. Others will be deceived, led astray from our Lord, the real Messiah and true Prophet. It indicates that a period will come, when the 'deceivableness of unrighteousness' shall be augmented.

Ver. 25. **I have told you beforehand.** (Mark 13: 23: 'But take ye heed.') A warning which can scarcely have been exhausted in the first century.

Ver. 26. **Behold, he is in the wilderness**, whither the impostors led their followers (Acts 21: 38).—**Behold, he is in the inner chambers**, teaching in private, proposing some scheme of deliverance. But ver. 27 points so unmistakably to the last days also, that we understand this caution as referring to all teachers who assert that the kingdom of heaven is in a given locality, or in some narrow form, and who therefore set forth some contracted conception of the second Advent. The caution then is against enthusiasm, superstition, and fanaticism, in the days of the waiting Church.

Ver. 27. **For as the lightning, etc.** At this point we must accept a direct reference to the end of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem was sudden, but here the ulterior sense, which was never absent, becomes the prominent one. 'We are here on the dim borderland of the primary and ultimate fulfilments of the words' (Plumptre). The great crises of history are always unexpected.—**From the east.** A literal explanation of this phrase is forbidden by the nature of the case. The sense is, Christ's coming will be sudden and all-pervading, unmistakable and fearful; visible too, we infer; glorious and purifying also, like the lightning. Only a Personal coming will fulfil this prediction.

Ver. 28. **Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.** In Luke 17: 37, this figure is the answer to the question of the disciples: 'Where Lord?' referring to the times of judgment. We therefore apply the metaphor to the necessity, inevitableness, and universality ('wheresoever') of judgment. The 'carcase' represents moral corruption; the 'eagles,' God's means of certain punishment when the time is ripe. The context

29 But immediately, after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the

points to two special occasions: 1. The destruction of Jerusalem when the Roman 'eagles' appeared as ministers of vengeance; 2. the last days when the cup of the world's iniquity shall be full and God's swift messengers of judgment ('the angels') shall come. Yet the principle is of universal application, and has been again and again exemplified in God's dealings. This verse answers the cry of the waiting Church: 'How long, O Lord' (Rev. 6: 10).

Vers. 29-31 seem to refer chiefly to the 'last times'. Up to this point our Lord, in answering a two-fold question, has given a two-fold answer, *i. e.*, spoken of two distinct events as analogous. The instruction in regard to the minor and near event (the destruction of Jerusalem) was necessary, but now the greater and more remote event becomes the chief subject. We should always keep in mind that the destruction of Jerusalem in the prophetic vision is the beginning of the end and foreshadows the final judgment. Otherwise confusion is inevitable.

Ver. 29. **But immediately.** This must be taken in its natural sense. The Lord, like the prophets of old, sees the far distant future as near at hand. 'A thousand years are as one day' before the eternal God (2 Pet. 3: 8). But it is plain from ver. 36 that Christ did not intend to define the length of the interval, or to encourage us to define it.—**After the tribulation of those days,** after the tribulation attending the destruction of Jerusalem, spoken of in vers. 15-22.—**The sun shall be darkened,** etc. Figurative and highly poetic description of portentous revolutions in the world at the approach of judgment. It is based upon extraordinary and awfully grand meteoric phenomena which occasionally occur. The Hebrew prophets use the same bold imagery, as Isa. 13: 10, when speaking of the fall of Babylon (comp. also 24: 19-23); Ezek. 32: 7, with reference to the fall of Egypt, Amos 8: 9; Joel 2: 30, 31. Comp. also the language of the Apocalypse, 8: 12: 'the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened,' etc. We have no right in any of these passages to press such language into a strictly literal meaning. (1) **Literal interpretation:** Visible phenomena in the heavens at the time of Christ's appearance, and a revolution of the physical universe and the whole solar system to prepare for 'the new heavens and the new earth' (2 Pet. 3: 12). (2) **Figurative interpretations:** 'The sun shall be darkened,' *i. e.*, the knowledge of Christ, the Sun of the Church and the world shall be obscured; 'the moon shall not give her light,' *i. e.*, the reflected light of science, which derives its excellence only from Christ, the true Sun, shall cease to guide; 'the stars shall fall from heaven;' kings and rulers shall be hurled from their thrones;

30 powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels ¹ with ² a great sound of a trumpet, and

¹ Many ancient authorities read *with a great trumpet, and they shall gather, &c.* ² Or, *a trumpet of great sound.*

or leaders and teachers of the Church shall become apostates : 'the powers of the heavens (the greater heavenly bodies) shall be shaken : ' the influences which rule human society shall be disturbed. Others (Dorner) refer the whole to the fall of heathenism with its worship of nature (sun, moon, and stars), but this is less probable, since terrifying occurrences seem to be meant (see Luke 21 : 25, 26).

Ver. 30. **The sign of the Son of Man in heaven.** This points to some unmistakable appearance preceding, or identical with, the personal manifestation of Christ. Some suppose a phenomenon like the star of the wise men ; the Fathers thought, a sign of the cross in the heavens ; others a luminous appearance visible to all, itself a glory like the Shekinah of old ; still others, the Messiah Himself who will be His own sign (comp. Dan. 7 : 13). The important matter is to recognize it when it comes, not to know in advance what it will be.—**All the tribes of the earth mourn.** All races and peoples shall join in one chorus, first of great and solemn lamentation ; not necessarily of real penitence, though that is not excluded, but rather of terror, occasioned by the events which have occurred and the foreboding of what is to follow. Comp. Rev. 1 : 7 ; also Zech. 12 : 10–14, where the families of Israel are represented as mourning.—**And they shall see the Son of man coming.** This coming is that referred to in 1 Thess. 4 : 16, at the first resurrection (Rev. 20 : 5, 6) ; a comparison with Rev. 19 : 11 sqq. suggests that this Advent precedes the millennium, but upon that point there has been much dispute.—**On the clouds of heaven.** 'In like manner' as He ascended (Acts 1 : 9, 11).—**With power and great glory,** manifested in the establishment of His kingdom on the earth. Some prefer to regard this coming as the beginning of a series of judgments afterwards set forth in vers. 45–51 ; chap. 25, covering the period symbolically set forth in the term 'thousand years' in Rev. 20 : 5, 6 ; but with the exception of the final judgment, all these are represented as occurring before this coming of the Lord. The safest opinion is, that a Personal coming of Christ is here meant, to take place after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21 : 24), and to be preceded by great catastrophes.

Ver. 31. **Send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.** The angels are 'ministering spirits' (Heb. 1 : 14) and will take part in the judgment as intimating before in the parables of the

they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its
33 leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that ¹he is
34 nigh, *even* at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be

¹ Or, *it*.

Tares and the Net (ch. 13: 41, 49). According to 1 Thess. 4: 16, the angels and trumpets are distinguished, the latter coming first. The trumpet, used to call assemblies together, refers to some means employed in connection with the actual 'angels' to gather Christ's people together. Comp. also 1 Cor. 15: 52.*—**And they shall gather together his elect**, the individual believers, from the organizations which contain or conceal them. Comp. ver. 22. A gathering, either of living and raised believers into one place, or of the saints hitherto scattered among the nations into one organization. It is implied that before that time no one organization will include all true believers. A lesson against sectarian bigotry wherever found.

Ver. 32. **Now from the fig tree learn her parable**, namely, what follows.—**Putteth forth its leaves**. The blossoms precede the leaves, and when the leaves come, the fruit season is near. Comp. chap. 21: 19. The cursing of the barren fig tree may be in mind even here. Alford: 'As that, in its judicial unfruitfulness, emblemized the Jewish people, so here the putting forth of the fig tree from its state of winter dryness, symbolizes the future reviviscence of that race.'

Ver. 33. **Even so ye also**. Addressed to the disciples, as representing the whole body of the elect. It does not mean that they should all live to see what he had predicted; two of the four (James and Peter) certainly died even before the destruction of Jerusalem.—**All these things**, *i. e.*, the signs mentioned, culminating in those predicted in ver. 30.—**Know ye that he is nigh**.—Christ Himself, since they had asked of His coming (ver. 3).

Ver. 34. **This generation**. The generation then living; comp. chap. 16: 28. See note below.—**Shall not pass away**. Of the Apostles, John at least survived the destruction of Jerusalem (70), and lived to the close of the first century.—**Till all these things**, including apparently both the signs and the coming.—**Be accom-**

* 'Hark! the trumpet's wondrous tone,
Through the tombs of every zone,
Summons all before the throne.'

(From the *Dies Irae* of Thomas of Celano.)

35 accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away,

plished, literally, 'become' (γενῆτα). The ideal of actual occurrence is the prominent one, not that of fulfilment.

Explanations of GENERATION (ἡ γενεὰ αὐτῆς), *generation* in the usual and ordinary sense, i. e., the collective body of persons living at that time (as in chap. 1: 17; 11: 16; 12: 39, 42, 45; Luke 1: 50, and many other passages). A generation usually extends through thirty or forty years, or more (even one hundred years; comp. Gen. 15: 16; Ex. 12: 40). This sense seems to be required by ch. 16: 28, where our Lord says: 'There are some of them that stand here who shall in no wise taste death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.' The Apostles accordingly expected His coming as being *near* at hand, though they never fixed the day or year. This interpretation does not conflict with ver. 36, and would no doubt be generally accepted if the word occurred after ver. 22 or 28, before the prophecy takes a wider range and further outlook to the end of the world. As it stands, it involves the difficulty of referring the *whole* preceding prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred forty years afterwards. But this immediate application does not necessarily exclude an *ulterior* and more literal fulfilment in the final judgment, which is foreshadowed in the destruction of the Jewish theocracy. History is an ever-widening and deepening fulfilment of prophecy. 'The assertion that the Apostles erred in the expectation of the near coming of Christ, rests on a confusion of the religious hope with an ordinary mathematical calculation, and of the majestic coming of Christ, which is going on constantly in the process of history, with His last individual appearance' (Lange).

(2) 'Generation' in the sense of 'race' or 'people' (= γένος). This meaning occurs in Homer and other classics, but not in the New Testament (although Matt. 12: 45 and Luke 16: 8 are quoted as examples), and would not have been proposed except for the difficulty just mentioned.* It has again been differently defined: (a) the whole human race (Jerome). But this is self-understood. (b) The spiritual Israel, the race of Christian believers (Origen, Chrysostom, Lange). Same objection. (c) The Jewish race (Calov, Dörner, Farrar), which has with wonderful tenacity lasted to this day, and will undoubtedly continue until the complete fulfilment of the prophecy. This would be a very striking and appropriate meaning, if it could be established from New Testament usage.

Ver. 35. **Heaven and earth shall pass away.** Not merely a strong asseveration (sooner shall heaven and earth pass away), but also a plain declaration that they shall pass away. Comp. Ps. 102: 26; Isa. 51: 6; 2 Pet. 3: 12, 13. The time is not indicated.—**But my**

* Strictly speaking, γενεά even in Homer does not mean *people*, but 1) race, stock; 2) generation; 3) offspring; 4) age. See Stephanus, *Thes.*, Liddell & Scott, Robinson, and Grimm.

36 but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of
 37 heaven, ¹neither the Son, but the Father only. And as *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the ²coming of
 38 the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah

¹ Many authorities, some ancient, omit *neither the Son*.

² Gr. *presence*.

words shall not pass away. What majesty in this assertion made at a time when there was not the least prospects of fulfilment, yet verified from day to day ever since! In the mouth of any mere man, such a claim would be mad or wicked presumption.

Ver. 36. **But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven.** The oldest MSS. add: **neither the Son**, as in Mark 13: 32. This is implied also in the phrase: **but the Father only**. Explanations: (1) Christ did not know as *man*, but knew at the same time as God. But this destroys the unity of His personality and consciousness. (2) He did not know *officially*, and hence did not make known to His disciples. A mere make-shift, which is excluded by 'no one,' and 'the angels.' (3) A voluntary self-limitation in knowledge during the state of humiliation when Christ, as a true man, '*advanced in wisdom*' (Luke 2: 52), '*learned obedience*,' and '*was made perfect*' (Heb. 5: 8, 9). When He became incarnate, He '*emptied Himself*' (Phil. 2: 7), laid aside for a while His divine glory with the attributes of power and majesty (omnipotence, omnipresence), and entered into all the necessary limitations of human existence. Lange calls it a 'holy unwillingness to know and to reflect prematurely upon the point of time of the parousia, thereby setting an example to the Church.' We may refer for illustration to Paul's determination not to know anything but Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2: 2).—On any interpretation, the verse contains a serious warning against chronological curiosity. We cannot and ought not to know more than Christ knew or was willing to know in the days of His humiliation. All mathematical calculations and predictions of the year of the millennium or the judgment are a waste of learning and ingenuity, and have failed, and must fail. It is better for us not to know it, else God would have revealed it. He has wisely concealed from us the time of our own departure lest we be miserable, or relax our energy.

Ver. 37. **But as were the days of Noah.** The second coming of Christ will be sudden and unexpected. Our Lord assumes, that there was a flood sent in judgment in the days of Noah. He endorses the history contained in the Book of Genesis, and written on Babylonian bricks.

Ver. 38. **They were eating and drinking,** seeking their enjoyment, not expecting the catastrophe. The verse does not at all

39 entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the ¹coming of the Son of man. Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women *shall be grinding at the mill*; one is taken, and one is left. Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. ²But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be ³broken through. Therefore

¹ Gr. *presence*.

² Or, *But this ye know*.

³ Gr. *digged through*.

imply that Christ's people are to cease their ordinary employments, in expectation of the coming of Christ. Absorption in these things is censured.

Ver. 39. **Knew not.** Even after Noah was in the ark, their unbelief continued; so men will persist in unbelief, despite the fear mentioned in Luke 21: 24, 25; will at least go on as if unconcerned.

Ver. 40. **Then shall two men be in the field.** Until that time Christ's people are to be in companionship with the world.—**One is taken**, i. e., gathered as one of the elect (ver. 31). The one 'taken' is the blessed one. There is no direct allusion to death. This differs from the event referred to in vers. 16-18, where voluntary flight is commanded, and from the judgment (chap. 25: 31 sqq.), where all are gathered.

Ver. 41. **Two women shall be grinding at the mill.** The employment of female slaves. Exod. 11: 5; Isa. 47: 2, etc. Women in the East, one or two together, facing each other, turn the hand-mills, having the handle of the upper mill-stone in their hands, and turning it round on the nether one, which is fixed. A familiar sight in Palestine even now.

Ver. 42. **Watch therefore.** In view of the suddenness and unexpectedness of this coming, 'watch.' Mark: 'watch and pray.' Not, be always expecting what will come unexpectedly, nor be seeking to know what cannot be known, but be always in the state of readiness, because of the uncertainty.

Ver. 43. **If the master of the house had known, etc.** Comp. Obad. 5; 1 Thess. 5: 1-10; 2 Pet. 3: 10; Rev. 3: 3; 16: 15. The idea of surprise is the main one, as throughout these verses. Watchfulness under uncertainty is constant. The figure has a further application to the hour of death, when for the individual the Lord comes; and to great catastrophes of judgment upon nations.

Ver. 44. **Therefore be ye also ready.** Comp. Luke 21: 34, 36. To be ready at all is to be ready always. 'Readiness is all.' The caution of this passage is not a threatening for the Lord's people. He

be ye also ready : for in an hour that ye think not the
 45 Son of man cometh. Who then is the faithful and
 wise ¹servant, whom his lord hath set over his house-
 46 hold, to give them their food in due season? Blessed
 is that ¹servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall
 47 find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he will
 48 set him over all that he hath. But if that evil ¹ser-

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

does not rule them by terror; those ready find Him a friend; only those not ready find His coming as uncomfortable as that of a thief.

Vers. 45-51. A parable, though not distinctly marked as such in its form. Comp. the parallel account in Mark 13: 34-36; and similar language on another occasion in Luke 12: 35-46. Such repetitions are not unusual. This passage, closely connected with the second Advent, contains instruction for the Church, while waiting for that event. It applies primarily to the Apostles (on the former occasion mentioned by Luke, it was called forth by Peter), and thus to all officers in the Church; but has a lesson for all Christians. The contrast is between the faithful and the unfaithful servant, with a more extended reference to the latter.

Ver. 45. **Who then is?** A personal question for every believer, but not a discouraging one.—**The faithful and wise servant.** 'Wise' because 'faithful' in Christ's service. Faithfulness alone is success.—**Whom his Lord hath set over his household.** Mark's account (13: 34) represents a number of servants left by the master, each with his appointed work. Here one servant is placed over the whole, as a steward. Ministers of Christ are referred to, since these are elsewhere represented as 'set' by Him in the Church (1 Cor. 4: 1, 2; 12: 28; 1 Thess. 5: 12, 13), but for a specific purpose: **to give them their food**, namely, that provided by the Lord, and adapted and necessary for them, **in due season.** The food is God's word, which is to be rightly divided (2 Tim. 2: 15). Ruling is included only as far as essential for the purposes of teaching. It is the 'faithful servant' whom the Lord has set over the household.

Ver. 47. **He will set him over all that he hath.** The servant, faithful up to the unexpected arrival of his lord, is rewarded, and is called 'blessed' (ver. 47). The reward is promotion to be possessor of the full inheritance. Comp. Rom. 8: 17; also chap. 25: 21; Rev. 2: 26; 3: 21. Alford: '*Each faithful servant shall be over all his master's goods. That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another, but rather like the diffusion of love, in which, the more each has, the more there is for all.*'

Ver. 48. **But if that evil servant.** The form is changed from

49 vant shall say in his heart, My lord tarrieth; and shall begin to beat his fellow-servants, and shall eat
50 and drink with the drunken; the lord of that ¹servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an
51 hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him ²asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

² Or, *severely scourge him*.

that in ver. 45, as if to intimate that such cases would readily occur, without need of special inquiry. The verse is a caution to the faithful to persevere, and a warning to those who intrude into the ministry.—**Shall say**, not openly, for the official position forbids that; but **in his heart**, and in his conduct (ver. 49).—**My lord tarrieth**. Comp. 2 Pet. 3: 3, 4. This implies that a long delay would occur. The servant began well, and still recognizes Christ as His Lord ('my lord'). The spring of all his evil conduct was unbelief; whether the Lord came sooner or later, his duty remained the same.

Ver. 49. **Beat his fellow-servants**. The faithful ones, since the others would join with him. He plays the lord over God's heritage (1 Pet. 5: 3), abusing instead of nourishing the household (ver. 45). Unfaithfulness to Christ speedily manifests itself in such conduct: censure of others, pride toward others, despotism over others, who are 'fellow-servants.'—**Shall eat and drink with the drunken**. To show laxity of conduct toward the evil members of the household, and to invite the world to help him revel. Beating the fellow-servants leads to worldliness and immorality.

Ver. 50. **The Lord of that servant**. Christ is still 'lord' of the unfaithful and sinful servant.—**Shall come**. Doubt of His coming does not hinder it.—**In a day**, etc. The unexpected, sudden coming is again brought forward. To the unfaithful our Lord often comes suddenly in this world, to correct while hope of amendment remains; but ver. 51 refers to something final. Before the Second Advent, when the whole Church shall be tried as to faithfulness, the coming to individuals is at death.

Ver. 51. **And shall cut him asunder**. An ancient mode of punishment among the Israelites (1 Sam. 15: 33; 2 Sam. 12: 31). Extreme punishment is here meant; but the peculiar expression indicates something further, a fearful separating of the conscience and the conduct, so that the condemning power of the former is a constant scourge against the continued evil of the latter. This will be a terrible element of future retribution.—**Appoint his portion with the hypocrites**. Luke has 'with the unbelievers.' Such a servant is not necessarily a mere hypocrite; but his conduct deserves and will receive the punishment allotted to hypocrites. Unfaithfulness, especially in the ministry, will suffer the worst punishment; the faithful

CHAPTER 25: 1-13.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

25: 1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their ¹lamps, and went

¹ Or, *torches*.

servant was also 'wise' (ver. 45), the evil servant is most unwise.—**The weeping and (the) gnashing of teeth.** Comp. chaps. 13: 42, 50; 25: 30, 41, 46. The future punishment is of the same character for all, even though there be degrees of it. This picture of judgment on rulers of the Church comes first. The history of ecclesiastical despotism in every age, and on the smaller as well as the largest scale, abundantly shows how needful the warning is.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins, vers. 1-13.

The three parables of ch. 25 are peculiar to Matthew, and the natural conclusion of the eschatological discourse in ch. 24. THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS is closely joined to the preceding one. The leading idea is the watchfulness or readiness of the Church for the coming of the Lord. See the closing exhortation (ver. 13). The last parable applies mainly to rulers, this to the whole Church. Interpreters differ as to the exact time referred to in this and the following parable. Both distinctly point to the future coming of Christ, and not to the destruction of Jerusalem; but is that coming immediately followed by the judgment described in vers. 31-46? Some hold that a thousand years will intervene, during which Christ will personally reign on the earth (Rev. 20: 4-7). This is the 'pre-millennial' view. The other view is that the Second Advent will immediately precede the judgment. The 'pre-millennial' interpretation involves a number of difficulties. All calculations or definite explanations about the time and order of these last things, are discouraged by the whole scope of this discourse.

Ver. 1. **Then.** At the period spoken of in the last chapter. The judgment upon those in office, having a more direct application to the Apostles, is mentioned before the judgment upon the people.—**Ten.** The number of completion among the Jews; it may have been usual in wedding processions.—**Virgins.** To carry out the figure of a wedding.—**Took their lamps,** (better, 'torches,' as in John 18: 3). Each had a lamp for herself, probably a torch made by winding rags about a piece of iron, and fastening it to a thick wooden staff. The oil was poured on the wick, the vessel containing the oil not forming a part of the torch or lamp (ver. 4).—**And went forth to meet the bridegroom.** Some Western authorities (D. Itala, Vulg.) add 'and of the bride,' which Westcott and Hort note on the margin. According to Eastern custom (among the Jews and Greeks), the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends, went first to the house of the bride's father, and then led the bride to his own home where the marriage feast was celebrated. On the way he was met by a procession of vir-

2 forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were
 3 foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when
 4 they took their ¹ lamps, took no oil with them : but the
 5 wise took oil in their vessels with their ¹ lamps. Now
 while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and
 6 slept But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the

¹ Or, *torches*.

gins, the attendants and friends of the bride, who waited (probably in the bride's house) for the signal of his coming, and then went out to meet him at nightfall, provided with lamps or torches. Hence the frequent allusion of classical writers to nuptial torches (*λαμπάδες*). Some commentators (Meyer and Keil) assume here a departure from the usual custom, namely, that the marriage is supposed to take place in the house of the *bride* (as in Judg. 14 : 10), since Christ at His *parousia* comes down from heaven to establish His kingdom on earth. Others (Trench and Mansel) assume that the virgins are to join the bridal procession on its way back from the house of the bride to the house of the bridegroom and are waiting at some intermediate place. Christ is the bridegroom; the Church is the bride, but is here not mentioned because the 'virgins' represent the individuals making up the Church, as do the guests in the parable of the wedding of the king's son (chap. 22 : 1-14).

Ver. 2. **Five of them were foolish**, etc. This equal division may have a meaning. The correct order is transposed in the common version. The whole church at the time of Christ's coming will be divided into these two classes, nominal and real Christians.

Vers. 3, 4. **For the foolish**. The insertion of 'for' introduces this as an evidence of their folly.—**But the wise**, provided themselves with oil in the proper vessels. Explanations : (1.) The lamps refer to the outward Christian appearance, the oil to inward spiritual life, the grace of God in the heart. This we prefer. (2.) The lamps represent the human heart, supplied with the oil of the Spirit, the vessels being the whole human nature. (3.) The lamps mean 'faith' the oil 'works,' (4.) the lamps 'works,' the oil 'faith.' The latter two are far-fetched.

Ver. 5. **Now while the bridegroom tarried**; as they were waiting for him; an allusion to the possible delay of the Lord beyond the expectation of the Apostles.—**All slumbered and slept**. Sleep overcame them, even while trying to keep awake. This indicates an unconscious giving way to the influence of the world. Christ's coming will be unexpected by all, even by those who make calculations about it. But the wise virgins were prepared when He came suddenly.

Ver. 6. **But at midnight**. At a late, dark season, the most unsuitable too for the foolish virgins to make good their lack.—**There is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom!** This was usual. A sign of the

7 bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all
 8 those virgins arose, and trimmed their ¹ lamps. And
 the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for
 9 our ¹ lamps are going out. But the wise answered,
 saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us
 and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for
 10 yourselves. And while they went away to buy, the
 bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in
 with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut.
 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord,

¹ Or, *torches*.

coming of Christ (chap. 24: 30). For the individual, that cry may come at any time. (The word 'cometh' is omitted by the oldest MSS.)

Ver. 7. **Arose, and trimmed their lamps**, *i. e.*, trimmed the wick and put on fresh oil, so as to make a brilliant flame. 'All' did this; the foolish virgins were not lacking in effort. But trimming does little good, if there is no oil.

Ver. 8. **For our lamps are going out**, not 'are gone out' (E. V.). The flax was still smoking. The trimming of the wick made this apparent. Merely outward Christian appearance will show its insufficiency in the midnight when the Bridegroom comes.

Ver. 9. **Peradventure**. This was a refusal, in a tone of regretful tenderness. ('Not so' in the E. V. is not in the Greek, a correct paraphrase.) The reply is not selfish even in the figure, for it is affirmed: **there will not be enough**. To have divided the oil would have entirely defeated the purpose of the procession. In that hour each must stand for himself, each having for himself the oil of grace to make his lamp burn brightly. No one can believe for another. The brightness of the outward life, moreover, is to be a part of the glory of that hour.—**Go ye rather to them that sell**. This probably refers to the means of grace; the Scriptures, prayer, the ministry. Some even find here an argument for a paid ministry. But the 'buying' and 'selling' are parabolic. No gift of God can be bought with money (Acts 8: 20). 'Buy wine and milk without money and without price,' Isa. 25: 1.

Ver. 10. **And while they went away to buy**. They kept up their endeavor to the very last (see ver. 11), but probably did not get a supply of oil at that late hour.—**They that were ready**, (*i. e.*, the wise virgins) **went in with him to the marriage feast**; comp. Rev. 19: 7-9; 21: 2.—**And the door was shut**. No more entrance to the feast. Too late, too late! The case of those without ('outer darkness'; comp. chap. 8: 12) was finally decided.

Ver. 11. **Afterward come also the other virgins**. The story is carried to its conclusion; the foolish virgins did not lack per-

12 Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily
 13 I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore,
 for ye know not the day nor the hour.

sistent effort. We may understand the verse as a mere carrying out of the story, or as showing the persistent appeals of the self-deceived, without regard to time. Comp. chap. 7: 22. The more literal application is given below.

Ver. 12. **I know you not.** Comp. chap. 7: 23. 'The Lord knoweth them that are His' (2 Tim. 2: 19). The refusal is definite and apparently final, and is the basis for the exhortation which follows. Some of the advocates of the pre-millennial view (among them Dean Alford) suppose that this refusal excludes only from the millennium, not from the ultimate kingdom of glory in heaven, finding a difference between the phrase here and in chap. 7: 23. They refer the parable, not to the final judgment, but to the coming of the Lord to His personal reign. On this view the lesson respects the blessedness of endurance unto the end, of keeping the light bright for the coming of the Bridegroom, however delayed. The ten virgins represent Gentile congregations accompanying the Bride, the Jewish Church. Nor are any of them hypocrites, but all faithful souls bearing their lamps; the foolish ones, however, making no provision for the supply of the oil of the Spirit, but trusting that the light once burning, would ever burn, neglecting watchfulness and prayer. As it was, their lamps were only going out (ver. 8), and their effort was too late *for that time*. At the general judgment, such will be judged in common with the rest of the dead. To all this it may be objected that the final judgment has already been spoken of in chap. 24: 51, and that the exhortation of ver. 13 loses its emphasis, if there is another day of grace for these.

Ver. 13. **Watch therefore.** The same admonition as in chap. 24: 42, 44. 'Wherein the Son of man cometh' (E. V.), is omitted by the best authorities. This makes the exhortation more general. The coming of our Lord, in so far as Christian individuals are concerned, is the day of death. Then the door is shut: the door of repentance, of hope, of salvation, shut by Him that shutteth and none can open: 'Watch, therefore,' that the Christian profession is supplied by the oil of the Spirit, so that His sudden unexpected coming may not find us without oil for our lamps.

The parable of the Virgins has furnished the key-note to several grand hymns, *e. g.* the midnight hymn of the Eastern Church:

'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night,
 And blest is he whose loins are girt, whose lamp is burning bright;'

Philip Nicolai's '*Wachet auf*:'

'Awake, awake, for night is flying,
 The watchmen on the heights are crying;
 Awake, Jerusalem, at last!'

CHAPTER 25 : 14-30.

The Parable of the Talents.

14 For *it is as when* a man, going into another country, called his own ¹servants, and delivered unto

¹ Gr. *bond-servants*.

and Alfred Tennyson's very solemn and effective poem (in 'Idylls of the King') on the foolish virgins :

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night, and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

"Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."'

(See these poems in full in Schaff's *Christ in Song*. For rich practical remarks see Lange, *Matt.* p. 440 sq.)

The Parable of the Talents, vers. 14-30.

CONTENTS. The close connection of this parable with the last is indicated by its opening words. The time is the same, but the two can readily be distinguished: 'The virgins were represented as *waiting* for the Lord, we have here the servants *working* for Him. There the inward spiritual rest of the Christian was described; here his external activity. There, by the end of the foolish virgins, we are warned against declensions and delays, in the inward spiritual life; here against sluggishness and sloth in our outward vocation and work' (Trench). 'There, the foolish virgins failed *from thinking their part too easy*—here the wicked servant fails *from thinking his too hard*' (Alford).

This parable must also be distinguished from the more complicated parable of the ten Pounds (*minæ*); Luke 19: 12-27. They were uttered on different occasions (this to the disciples on the Mount of Olives just before the crucifixion, that to the people in Jericho the week previous); and with a different purpose (this to exhort disciples to be ready for the return of the Lord, that to warn against the idea of the *speedy* coming of the kingdom of God in a temporal sense). Here different sums are entrusted to each servant; there the same and a much smaller sum (one pound). There is a difference in the number of servants (three in Matthew, ten in Luke), and in the purpose of the Lord's absence. The behaviour of the wicked servant is not described in identical terms. The parallel in Luke applies to official persons; this to all, even nominal Christians.

Ver. 14. **For it is.** The events illustrated in the previous parable. 'The kingdom of heaven' (supplied in the O. V.) is not specific enough. The omission of 'the Son of man,' etc. (ver. 13) forbids our supplying 'He is.'—**As when a man, going into another country,** 'going abroad.' Here Christ is represented as a man of wealth; in Luke as a nobleman gone to receive a kingdom.—**His own servants,** the professed followers of Christ, not merely the ministry.—**And delivered unto them his goods.** The spiritual blessings which are 'his,' more general than chap. 24: 45, where the office of the ministry is plainly referred to.

15 them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey. 16 Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. 17 In like manner he also that *received* the two gained 18 other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Ver. 15. **Five talents—two—one.** A large sum; see note on ch. 18: 24. In Luke the trust is the same for each servant, but only one pound (= 100 drachmas or about \$16). The 'pound' represents an official gift; the 'talents,' gifts of the Spirit in different degrees. The greater value of the talent suggests the superiority of spiritual endowments to merely official ones. This parable has led to the use of the word 'talent' (in German and French as well as in English) to denote natural endowments also.—**According to his several ability.** Here natural 'talents' are referred to. Even spiritual gifts are regulated by persons' susceptibility and capacity. The 'ability' is as really but less directly the gift of God. Sufficiently our own to occasion strict responsibility, such 'ability' is not enough our own to warrant pride. It is here, moreover, capacity for 'spiritual' gifts.—**Went on his journey.** The order of the parable is that demanded by its form; but the Ascension (the departure) preceded the day of Pentecost (the distribution of gifts). This should caution us against theories about the order of events at the coming of Christ. 'Straightway,' owing to a change of reading, must be placed in ver. 16.

Vers. 16, 17. The Lord's absence represents in general the period between the Ascension and the second coming of the Lord; in the case of individuals, the day of death terminates the period of activity.—**Straightway.** Each faithful servant began his activity at once; and each gained a sum equal to that intrusted to him. In the other parable, the gift is the same, the gain varied. Success in official position varies; but the blessing from faithful use of God's spiritual gifts is in direct proportion to those gifts. As applied to us, the talents may be constantly *given*, as well as constantly *gaining*.

Ver. 18. **Went away, in carelessness.—Digged in the earth and hid his lord's money.**—Not an active ill-doer, like the wicked servant of chap. 24: 48, but simply neglectful of the blessing given him. He buried his spiritual gift in what is earthly, fleshly; 'the napkin' in the other parable means idleness in office. The man with the one (spiritual) talent is negligent, not because he has little natural capacity, but from envy, or false ideas of human inability (ver. 24), etc. Among the Apostles, Judas affords a sad illustration.

19 Now after a long time the lord of those ¹servants
 20 cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And
 he that received the five talents came and brought
 other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst
 unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five
 21 talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good
 and faithful ²servant: thou hast been faithful over
 a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter
 22 thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that
received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou
 deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained
 23 other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well
 done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been
 faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many
 24 things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And

¹ Gr. *bond-servants*.

² Gr. *bond-servant*.

Ver. 19. **Now after a long time.** Long in the history of the whole Church, and long enough in the case of individuals, to allow them to make good use of the trust. Another intimation that the coming of the Lord may be long delayed (comp. 24: 48).

Ver. 20. **I have gained.** In addition to and through the talents entrusted. Spiritual gifts are the means of increasing spirituality, yet human effort and responsibility enters.

Ver. 21. **I will set thee over many things.** In the kingdom of glory; or on the other theory, during the millennium. An intimation that there is enlarged activity as well as rest in the future world. —**Into the joy of thy Lord.** In Luke the official position is recognized in the rule over 'ten cities,' etc.; here the reward has a reference to the personal spiritual life. 'The joy;' the blessed inheritance which Christ's servants will have with Him. The reference to a 'feast' seems unnecessary.

Ver. 23. **Well done.** The same commendation for the same faithfulness; the amount was smaller, but the trust was smaller, the reward was the same also. In spiritual things faithfulness is success. Christ expects faithful, not profitable, servants. In Luke 19: 17, 19, the reward is proportioned to the amount gained. All faithful servants inherit the same heaven of bliss; but there are different degrees of bliss adapted to the capacities.

Ver. 24. **Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man.** A common excuse: the master is hard and selfish. Men represent God as demanding from them what they cannot perform. In the parable, and in reality, the excuse is inconsistent and self-convicting.—

he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering
 25 where thou didst not scatter: and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou
 26 hast thine own. But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful ¹servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather
 27 where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with inte-

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

Reaping where thou didst not sow. '*This is man's lie, to encourage himself in idleness*' (Alford).—**Didst not scatter.** A repetition of the former thought, the sowing being represented as scattering to bring into contrast the gathering into the barn. Others refer it to 'winnowing,' or driving away the chaff from the grain.

Ver. 25. **I was afraid.** Both true and false. He had a fear of his lord's punishment; but that did not make him idle. Being afraid of God, is an excuse, not a reason, for men's neglect of His gifts. The insolent speech shows that the servant did not really regard his master as 'hard.'—**Thou hast thine own.** The interest of the money, the profit of his own time and labor, due to the lord, should have been added before this could be true. Such a closing of accounts with God is an eternal breach with Him.

Ver. 26. **Wicked because slothful.** Neglect is also wickedness.—**Knewest thou.** A question. Granting that this were the case; comp. Luke 19: 22: 'Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee.'

Ver. 27. **Thou oughtest therefore to have put.** Lit., 'thrown,' i. e., thrown on the money-table, which required no exertion. A refutation of the servant on his own plea.—**My money.** The trust demanded this.—**To the bankers,** who receive money on deposit and pay interest for its use, lending it on higher interest. The Greek word has the same etymology as the English one ('table-keepers,' sitting at their bench or *bancum*). These probably represent stronger spiritual characters who would have quickened his spirituality. If the 'talents' be understood as including temporal trusts, such as money, then 'religious and charitable societies,' as Alford suggests, fulfil this office.—**Mine own with interest** (not 'usury,' O. V.). It is implied that the duty, profit, and pleasure of the servant should have been in gaining for the master. The theory of Christianity is, that laboring for Christ is not a matter of bargain, but of loving service. When the servant came with a false plea of returning to the

28 rest. Take ye away therefore the talent from him,
 29 and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For
 unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall
 have abundance: but from him that hath not, even
 30 that which he hath shall be taken away. And cast
 ye out the unprofitable ¹servant into the outer dark-
 ness: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of
 teeth.

CHAPTER 25: 31-46

The Final Judgment.

31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory,

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

master what was justly his, he was condemned on his own showing. Those who treat the service of Christ as a bargain will be justly condemned.

Ver. 28. **Take ye away therefore the talent from him.** This command will be given, whether the latter be a spiritual or temporal gift.—**Give it unto him that hath the ten talents.** Comp. Luke 19: 24-26. This act of judgment on the slothful servant becomes an act of mercy to the faithful one. Thus the kingdom was taken away from Saul and given to David, and the gospel passed from the unfaithful Jews to the believing Gentiles. Demosthenes says: 'The possessions of the negligent belong of right to those who will endure toil and danger.'

Ver. 29. **For unto every one that hath shall be given.** The expression is well-nigh proverbial. Comp. chap. 13: 12, where it is applied to spiritual knowledge (through parables); here it refers to the whole spiritual life. It is not a law for conduct between man and man, but of God's dealings in providence and grace. He is the owner, and we the trustees. The principle is not arbitrary, for the trust is proportioned to 'ability,' and the taking away is the result of slothfulness and misuse. The giving is a gracious reward, but always in accordance with the previous development.

Ver. 30. Comp. chap. 8: 12; 22: 13. An obvious allusion to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, so that this and the preceding parable must refer to the same point in the future. In Luke, the nobleman becomes a king, who punishes his rebellious servants; here the parable closes with the just administration of the landowner, although the King comes into all the more glorious prominence in the last parable, ver. 31 sqq.

The Final Judgment, vers. 31-46.

CONTENTS. We have here a picture of the grand concluding act of the several judgments described in these eschatological discourses. An awfully solemn reality. not

and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the

merely a parable, though containing the figure of a shepherd dividing the sheep from the goats (vers. 32, 33).

Two days before the crucifixion Christ presents Himself as the judge of the world. This contrast deepens our view of His foresight and majesty, and of the sublimity of the description.

The *subjects* of this judgment are 'all the nations,' ver. 32. But in what sense? Explanations:

1. All mankind, Christians included. This is the usual view (De Wette, Lange, C. Fr. Keil, Mansel in 'Speaker's Com.,' etc.).

2. Christians only, for whom the kingdom of the Messiah is prepared, ver. 34 (Jerome, Grotius, Neander, Meyer).

3. The heathen nations (C. A. G. Keil, Olshausen, Stier, Auberlen, Keim, Greswell, Alford, Plumptre, and pre-millennarian commentators). The last view is very plausible for the following reasons: (a) the usual scripture meaning of the word 'the nations,' or 'the Gentiles' (*τὰ ἔθνη*), as distinguished from Israel, the people of God (Rom. 15: 11, 12; Eph. 2: 11, etc.). (b) The judgments upon the Christians have been already described in the parables of the Ten Virgins, and the Talents. Moreover the saints are said to take part in judging the world (1 Cor. 6: 2); comp., however, 2 Cor. 5: 10, 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.' (c) The righteous appear to be ignorant of Christ, ver. 37 sqq. (d) The judgment is pronounced according to works, without regard to faith. This seems to imply that there may be Christian charity without Christian faith, and that we may be saved without a knowledge of Christ,—a remarkable liberality which would open the doors of heaven to all who merely follow the light of natural religion. But here is just the difficulty. How can this be reconciled with the principle that out of Christ there is no salvation (Acts 4: 12), that we are justified by faith in Christ, and that without faith it is impossible to please God?

4. We, therefore, prefer the first view, but assume that *all* the nations of the earth will be nominally Christianized, that is become acquainted with the gospel salvation, before the general judgment (comp. Matt. 24: 14; 28: 19; Luke 21: 24; Rom. 11: 25, 26), so that the ignorance here spoken of can only be partial, and does not exclude a certain degree of faith. See note on ver. 37.

But no matter what interpretation we adopt, the Lord teaches us a wholesome lesson of charity. He will not judge men by a rigid creed, or the degree of knowledge, but will accept every one who was moved and animated by a genuine love for Him, or for those whom He is 'not ashamed to call His brethren' (Heb. 2: 11).

This description of the judgment has left its deep impress on Christian poetry. It is reproduced in a sublime Latin hymn of the seventh century (which contains the germ of the *Dies Iræ*), beginning (in J. M. Neale's version):

'That great Day of wrath and terror,
That last Day of woe and doom.'

The *Dies Iræ* thus alludes to it:

'Make me with Thy sheep to stand,
Far from the convicted band,
Placing me at Thy right hand.'

(See these and other judgment hymns in Schaff's *Christ in Song*, pp. 285 sqq.)

32 throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered
all the nations : and he shall separate them one from
another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the
33 ¹goats : and he shall set the sheep on his right hand,
34 but the ¹goats on the left. Then shall the King say
unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my
Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

¹ Gr. *kids*.

Ver. 31. **But when the Son of man shall come.** An interval is hinted at, but not asserted. The Father 'gave Him authority to execute judgment, *because He is Son of man*' (John 5: 27), and identified by personal experience and sympathy with all the interests of humanity so that it is His alone to redeem, to save or to judge.—**In his glory.** Comp. chap. 24: 30. The 'great glory' culminates in 'His glory' (comp. John 17: 5).—**And all the angels with him.** 'All the angels,'—'all the nations;' the former interested and active in the work of man's salvation. Comp. Heb. 1: 14; Matt. 13: 40; 24: 31; Luke 12: 8.—**Sit.** The sitting expresses 'finished victory.'—**The throne of his glory.**—More than 'glorious throne;' the throne peculiar to, manifesting, His glory. What and where it will be, we do not know; nor are these the most important questions.

Ver. 32. **Shall be gathered.** Whether voluntarily or involuntarily is not stated; but all submit (Phil. 2: 10).—**All the nations,** all mankind, which before the judgment will be nominally Christianized. See introductory note. The pre-millennial view excepts 'the elect,' but of this exception there is here no hint. Even if gathered before (chap. 24: 31), they may appear again as their Master does, at the public declaration of the gracious judgment, indicated by previously gathering them out in the days of tribulation.—**Shall separate them.** A process which is further described.—**As the shepherd.** Christ is really the Shepherd of all mankind. John 10: 14. Comp. Ez. 34: 17.—**Separateth the sheep from the goats,** lit., 'the lambs (gentle, tractable) from the he-goats' (proverbially wild, intractable, of less value, to which the idea of wantonness, uncleanness may be added). Together in the pasture, though usually in distinct groups, they are now finally divided.

Ver. 33. **The sheep on his right hand,** the place of preference. Some refer 'the sheep' to the *unconscious* Christians among the *heathen*, hinted at in Rom. 2: 7, 10, including the 'other sheep,' 'not of this fold' (John 10: 16). But how unlikely that, in this great picture, believers should be excluded, when the term 'sheep' is appropriated to them so often (John 10: 11, 14, 16, 26, 27).

Ver. 34. **The King.** Christ Himself. From this point there is no figure. It is the only time that our Lord thus calls Himself, though

foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and
 35 ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me
 36 drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked,

He acknowledges the title before Pilate (chap. 27: 11). He is the judge; comp. Luke 19: 38; John 5: 27; 2 Cor. 5: 10.—**Ye blessed of my Father**, who belong to my Father. Not 'blessed' now for the first time; whether believers or unconscious Christians, all the good in them came from the Father, through the Spirit, and for the sake of the Son. We are elect and blessed *in Christ* (Eph. 1: 3-6). It is not said in ver. 41 'Ye cursed' of *my Father*. The blessing comes from God, the curse from the sinner.—**Inherit the kingdom**. Peculiarly appropriate to the 'elect,' even were they gathered together before this time. Comp. Rom. 8: 14-17; Gal. 4: 6, 7; Heb. 1: 14.—**Prepared for you from the foundation of the world**. Christ has gone to prepare a place for His people (John 14: 2); but it was prepared for them from 'the foundation of the world' (comp. John 17: 24). The idea of choosing unto eternal life is plainly implied here, as it is expressed in John 6: 37; Rom. 8: 29, 30; Eph. 1: 11; 2 Thess. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 2. What follows shows human responsibility in the case of all. 'For you,' for all from the east and the west, the north and the south (8: 11), who in every nation fear God and work righteousness (Acts 10: 35).

Vers. 35 and 36 contain six parallelisms in the spirit of Hebrew poetry. Six works of mercy are mentioned; the first three are recognized duties of common humanity; the last three are voluntary acts of self-denying love. To visit prisoners was very rare; for prisons in old times were horrible and disgusting holes.

Ver. 35. **For**. The evidence that they are the 'blessed of my Father;' since the proceedings are judicial. The real ground lies deeper than the good deeds themselves (see ver. 40). Those addressed had been prepared for the kingdom prepared for them. Such works are the fruit of Divine grace (ver. 34); charity is the daughter of faith, and faith is wrought by the Holy Spirit. But faith is not to be measured by the degree of knowledge. That 'the verdict turns upon works, and not upon faith,' is no proof that believers are not included; judgment must in all cases be according to works, which in Christians are distinguished, but not divided, from faith. Comp. Matt. 7: 21; Rom. 2: 6; Gal. 5: 6; 2 Cor. 5: 10. But works are not judged according to their outward appearance, but according to their spirit and motive.—**Hungered**, etc. Heubner: 'the acts of love here named are not such as require merely an outlay of money, but such as involve also the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, comfort,' etc.—**Stranger**. A foreigner or traveller. In the East such an one was dependent upon private hospitality, and this had the reward of Paradise.

Ver. 36. **Naked**, or, poorly clothed.—**Sick—in prison**. Healing and release are not mentioned, these could be rendered by a few only; but visitation, sympathy, care, which all can give.

and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I
 37 was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the
 righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee
 an hungred, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee
 38 drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took
 39 thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw
 40 we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And
 the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say
 unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these
 my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me.
 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand,
¹Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which

¹ Or, *Depart from me under a curse.*

Vers. 37, 38. **Lord, when saw we thee, etc.** The language of humility rather than of ignorance; and humility is one of the chief Christian graces. Care for Christ's brethren, as such, implies some knowledge of Him. They recognize Christ as 'Lord.' The general Christianization of the world is pre-supposed.

Ver. 40. **Unto one of these my brethren, even these least** (or, 'these the least of my brethren'), **ye did it unto me.** This implies intercourse with Christians ('My brethren'); hence *some* knowledge of Christianity, however imperfect. Christ lives again and perpetually in the persons of His people; as we treat them, we treat Him. (Comp. Acts 9: 4: 'Why persecutest thou *Me*?') All men are to be treated kindly, because possible brethren of Christ. Some suppose that the saints appear with Christ as judges; hence the expression: 'these My brethren.' But no theory need exclude the pleasing thought that some may have unconsciously been 'blessed by the Father,' with love in their hearts, feeling its way to Him who is Love, through acts of charity to men, even while Christ has not been made known to them in this world.

Ver. 41. **Ye cursed.** 'Of my Father' (ver. 34) is significantly omitted, for the curse comes through their own fault.—**Which is prepared;** 'for you from the foundation of the world' is not added, but for **the devil and his angels**, prepared for him as a devil (his personal existence being evidently assumed) and the fallen angels (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2: 4). All these differences show that God is ever merciful, and that the punishment on those 'accursed' is a just one, that they go to torment prepared for the devil and his angels, because they have prepared themselves for it.—That the word **eternal** means never-ending, scarcely admits of a doubt; it is used in ver. 46 of the life of the righteous (see below). The word **fire** need not be taken literally (comp. Heb. 12: 29, where God is called a 'consuming fire');

42 is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an
 43 hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and
 43 ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took
 me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and
 44 in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they
 also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hun-
 45 gred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in
 prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall
 he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inas-
 much as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it
 46 not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal
 punishment; but the righteous into eternal life.

but whatever the punishment previous to the general judgment, after that the bodies of the wicked, then raised, shall partake in it; and this is not obscurely hinted here.

Vers. 42, 43. **For.** The evidence of their state of heart follows. Only sins of *omission* are mentioned; the absence of good works, the destitution of love, or the dominion of selfishness is sufficient, even without positive crimes, to exclude from heaven.

Ver. 44. **When saw we thee,** etc. A self-righteous plea of ignorance, not of the Lord, but of opportunities of seeing Him in want, implying that they would have done such good works, had they had a chance. The answer of the Lord in ver. 45 repeats the principle of ver. 40. Many fancy they would do good to Christ, who fail to see Him in the person of His followers; and the deceitful fancy often continues until the day of retribution.

Ver. 46. **Comp. Dan. 12: 2. Into eternal punishment.** The opposite is **eternal life**, both never ending, the Greek word being the same. In the New Testament 'eternal' is used fifty-nine times of the happiness of the righteous, of God's existence, or of the Church and the Messiah's kingdom; in seven, of the future punishment of the wicked. If the former end, then the latter may. The word 'punishment' expresses positive misery, not 'annihilation'; especially 'life,' the contrasted expression, means here far more than mere continued existence. Endless and boundless life is contrasted with endless and boundless misery. The two facts, one transcendently glorious, the other unspeakably awful, are revealed: the details, blissful and terrible alike, are wisely withheld. Enough is known to enforce all needed practical lessons.

The O. V. here, as very often, unnecessarily and mischievously varies in translating the same word by two, viz. 'eternal' and 'everlasting.' 'Eternal' is preferable, being derived from the Latin *eternus* (contracted from *æviterus*, which comes from *ævum—aiōn*), and hence equivalent to the Greek *αἰώνιος*. It is intensive as well as extensive,

and begins already here in faith (which 'hath eternal life'); while 'everlasting' (*sempiternus*, *αἰδιος*) expresses simply *future* duration. 'Eternal' does not necessarily imply endlessness, but duration through one or more ages (comp. Rom. 16: 25; 2 Tim. 9: 9; Tit. 1: 2); but it is repeatedly applied in the New Testament to future punishment, and here to punishment *after* the final judgment, which, as far as we know fixes the state of man unchangeably and forever. In Dante's inscription on the door of hell are these fearful words:

'All hope abandon, ye who enter here!'
(*Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrare!*)

Yet, in view of the mercifulness of the Judge, who is a 'Son of man' (John 5: 27), in thorough sympathy with human trials and infirmities (Heb. 2: 17, 18; 4: 15; 5: 7-9), and who promises to reward even 'a cup of cold water' given to one of His humblest disciples (chap. 10: 42); in view also of the salvation of the countless multitude of infants that die before committing any actual transgression (comp. chap. 18: 2-6; 19: 14), we have good reason to hope that the number of the saved will vastly exceed the number of the lost. God's love is inseparable from His holiness and justice, but is infinitely higher and deeper than our poor conceptions of it.

CHAPTERS 26 AND 27.

THE DATE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. The point of difficulty is *the day of the month*. Our Lord died on Friday; but from very early times there has been a dispute whether this Friday was the 15th of Nisan or the 14th. The former view places the institution of the Lord's Supper at the regular time of eating the Passover, on the 14th in the evening (Exod. 12: 6, 8; 23: 5), the crucifixion taking place on the 15th, the first feast day, though not 'the first day of unleavened bread,' since the leaven was removed on the 14th (Exod. 12: 18, 19). The other view is, that Christ died on the 14th, at the time when the Paschal Lamb should be slain (after three o'clock in the afternoon), hence that the Last Supper was eaten a day before the regular time for the Passover feast.

Reasons for preferring the former view:—

1. The accounts given in the first three Gospels undoubtedly make the impression that the Lord's Supper was instituted during a Passover feast at the regular time. They all speak of it as 'the Passover,' and Mark says (14: 12), that it was the day 'when they killed' (or 'were wont to kill') 'the Passover,' while Luke (22: 7) remarks: 'when the Passover must be killed;' adding: 'and when the hour was come' (22: 14). The disciples asked where they should prepare to eat the Passover (Matthew and Mark). An anticipation of the regular time would have been noted, if not by the disciples, by the man at whose house they met.

2. Christ, who came to fulfil the law, would not have violated it in this instance.

3. A celebration on the day before would not have been permitted, as it was the custom then to slay the lamb in the temple.

4. If Christ had been crucified at the precise time when it was customary to slay the Paschal Lamb, some hint would have been given of so important a fulfilment of the Old Testament type.

5. The reasons for the other view are insufficient: (a) The passages in John which occasion the difficulty are not decisive, but rather confirm the view of the Synoptists:

CHAPTER 26: 1-16.

The Declaration of the coming Passion: the Counsel of the Rulers. The Anointing at Bethany. The Agreement of Judas.

26: 1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all

John 13: 1-4, 'Before the feast of the Passover—Jesus riseth from supper,' does not mean a *day* before (which would have been so expressed comp. 12: 1), but more naturally: *shortly* before, and refers to the commencement of the 15th of Nisan. Chap. 13: 27: 'What thou doest, do quickly,' was understood by the disciples as meaning: Buy what is needed, ver. 29. It is urged that if the feast had begun, no purchases could be made. But if a whole day remained, the word 'quickly' was unnecessary. In chap. 18: 28, John speaks of the fear of defilement felt by the Jews, intimating that early on the morning of the day of the crucifixion they had not yet eaten the passover; but this expression may refer to the continuance of the passover-feast. Besides, the defilement would have ceased in the evening, in time to eat the Passover, had the evening of Friday been the regular time. John twice speaks (19: 14, 31) of that Friday as a 'Preparation.' This need not be understood of the day before the Passover, for in all other instances, and also in John 19: 42, the reference is to the day before the Sabbath, not before a feast-day; 'Preparation-day' was the technical name for Friday, or Sabbath eve. 'The Preparation of the Passover' therefore means the paschal Friday, or the Friday of the Passover-week. The Sabbath would be 'a high day' (John 19: 31), as the first Sabbath of the Passover week, even though not the first day itself, as the other view implies.

(b) The chief priests were present at the crucifixion. But if that had been the time when the paschal lamb was slain, these men should have been present in the temple.

(c) The objection that an execution would not take place on the feast-day, is of very little weight. According to Deut. 17: 12, 13, executions were to be public and of a religious character, and Rabbi Akiba (about A. D. 125) distinctly states that they took place on feast-days. (See Wieseler, Kirchner, and Keil on *Matt.*, p. 522.) Further, the custom was to release a prisoner on the 'feast-day' (*Matt.* 27: 15; John 18: 39), and Barabbas seemed to have been released *before* the crucifixion (*Matt.* 27: 26).

DATE OF THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. Matthew and Mark place the anointing at Bethany between the counsel of the chief priests and the treacherous proposal of Judas. John places it just after the arrival at Bethany, 'six days before the Passover,' the entry to Jerusalem taking place 'in the next day.' We accept the latter, as the correct date. See notes on Mark 14: 3-9 and on John 13: 2. There is, however, nothing in Matthew to fix the time of the feast. He goes back in ver. 6 to an earlier event, which furnished occasion to Judas for furthering the design of the rulers, as related vers. 1-5. Matthew likes to group discourses and events which have a close connection.

The Declaration of the coming Passion: the Counsel of the Rulers. The Anointing at Bethany. The Agreement of Judas, vers. 1-16.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 14: 1-11; Luke 22: 1-6; John 12: 1-8. Our Lord had finished His public work as a Teacher; from this point He appears as High

2 these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that
after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man
3 is delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered
together the chief priests, and the elders of the people,
unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caia-

Priest. Matthew brings out this most fully.—The events narrated in this section, though not given in chronological order (see note above), are connected in thought. First comes the more definite declaration of our Lord as to the appointed time of His death (ver. 2). The rulers counsel a postponement (vers. 3-5). But Judas by his treachery (vers. 14-16) is the unconscious means of fulfilling our Lord's prophecy. The anointing at Bethany, which took place, as related by John (13: 1-8), six days before the Passover, is inserted here, because it helped to bring about this result.

Ver. 1. **Had finished all these words, i. e.,** in chs. 24 and 25. The time was Tuesday night of the Passion Week, after Wednesday had begun, according to the Jewish reckoning.

Ver. 2. **After two days.** This means, 'the day after to-morrow,' according to Jewish usage. As Wednesday had begun, Friday is the day indicated, beginning at sundown on (our) Thursday.—**The pass-over cometh.** On the origin of this feast, see Exod. 12: 1-14. The word 'passover' (introduced into English by Tyndale) expresses the literal sense of the Hebrew word (*pesach*, Gr. *pascha*), which refers to the passing over of the destroying angel, sparing the first-born of Israel in Egypt. It was the greatest Jewish festival, in commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and hence typical of the Christian redemption from the bondage of sin. It was a sacrificial feast (the paschal lamb, with its blood sprinkled on the door-posts) and a memorial feast of thanksgiving. The lamb was not consumed on the altar, nor made the portion of the priests, but used as food by the household of the offerer. Other ideas were expressed in the observances connected with it, most of which were typical of 'Christ our Passover.' The word 'Passover' is used in a threefold sense in the New Testament: (1.) The paschal lamb itself; Mark 14: 12; Luke 22: 7. (2.) The sacrificial lamb and the supper, Matt. 26: 17; Mark 14: 14; Luke 22: 11. (3.) The whole feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days. This is the sense here, and in Luke 22: 1; comp. John 2: 13; 6: 4; 11: 15; 12: 1; 13: 1, etc.—**Delivered up to be crucified.** The prophecy here is of the time. The events had already been foretold. That time was appointed, because our Lord would thus fulfil all that was typified in the Passover.

Ver. 3. **Then were gathered together.** Probably a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, the supreme council. The uncertainty of His enemies, despite their hostile desire, is in contrast with His clear statement of what would come to pass. **The chief priests,** the heads of the twenty-four courses. **The elders of the people,** the heads of the families, who represented the citizens of Jerusalem. 'And the

4 phas; and they took counsel together that they might
 5 take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him. But they said, Not
 during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.
 6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of

scribes' (O. V.) was probably inserted from Mark 14: 1; Luke 22: 2. Yet 'the scribes' formed a part of the Sanhedrin.—**Unto the court.** Not the 'palace,' but the court-yard it enclosed; comp. vers. 57, 69; Luke 22: 55.—**Who was called Caiaphas.** Josephus says he was originally called 'Joseph;' the form here used may point to an additional name. John (11: 51; 18: 13) says he was 'high-priest that same year,' and son-in-law of Annas, who had also been high-priest and was still called so (Acts 4: 6). The office was hereditary in the family of Aaron, and held for life; but Antiochus Epiphanes (B. C. 160) sold it to the highest bidder, and the Romans removed the incumbent at pleasure. Caiaphas was appointed by a Roman proconsul, his predecessor having been deposed, and was removed by a Roman emperor A. D. 36, about six years after this time. He was a Sadducee (Acts 5: 17) and courted the favor of the Romans; he and his associates raised the cry: 'We have no king but Cæsar' (John 19: 15). The scribes were mostly Pharisees and hated the Roman rule.

Ver. 4. **By subtilty.** They had failed to entrap Him by argument (22: 46), and to discredit Him with the Roman government (22: 22). To use force was dangerous and even impossible on account of the impression made by our Lord upon the people, which still continued (Luke 21: 38). Judas helped them out of the difficulty.

Ver. 5. **Not during the feast, i. e.,** the Passover week, during which the multitudes (sometimes, as in A. D. 65, reckoned at three millions on such occasions) remained at Jerusalem. But the unexpected treachery of Judas hastened the execution of the plan, and enabled them to avoid the risk of a popular uproar. Most of Christ's followers were Galilæans, and the Galilæans were all considered bold and quarrelsome. This feast was often the occasion of insurrection, according to Josephus. The enemies could not take Jesus when they would (John 10: 39), yet must take Him at a time when they purposed not, but which He had predicted (ver. 2). Both the taking and killing took place between the evenings of Thursday and Friday, which made up the first Passover day. Even in the greatest humiliation His power and truth still shine forth. The language implies that the execution *might* take place 'during the feast;' see p. 342.

Ver. 6. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany.** On Saturday evening, before the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (according to John). Mentioned here as an episode introductory to the narrative of the betrayal. The touching scene is recorded by all the Evangelists except Luke, who records a similar though different incident (ch. 7: 36).—**In the house of Simon the leper.** Probably already healed by

7 Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having
¹ an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and

¹ Or, a flask.

Jesus, since otherwise he would have been unclean. The name still adhered to him to distinguish him from other Simons. He must not be confounded with the Pharisee called Simon, at whose house in Galilee a similar anointing had taken place long before (Luke 7: 36-70). The two occurrences are clearly distinguished in many ways. One tradition makes this Simon of Bethany the father of Lazarus; another the husband of Martha, who served on this occasion. Both families may have occupied the same house; or Simon may have been the owner, and Lazarus his tenant. (The view of Hengstenberg that the historic Lazarus was identical with the poor Lazarus of the parable, Luke 16: 19, is a pure fiction and refuted by the costly liberality of Mary.)

Ver. 7. **There came unto him a woman.** Mary, the sister of Lazarus (comp. John 12: 3; Luke 10: 38-42); not the woman 'who was a sinner' in Luke 7: 37. The latter person is generally, but without good reason, identified with Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus freed of seven demons (Luke 8: 3; Mark 16: 9). Matthew and Mark could not be ignorant of Mary of Bethany; and their silence about her and the resurrection of Lazarus must have had a special reason. Luke, however, introduces us to Mary and Martha on an earlier occasion (10: 38-42) and in the same character as John (ch. 11).—**Having an alabaster cruse, or 'flask.'** Alabaster vases were considered by the ancients the best receptacle for valuable ointments or fragrant oils. The vessels usually had a long neck, and were sealed at the top.—**Of exceeding precious ointment.** 'A pound (about 12 ounces) of ointment of spikenard,' according to John; 'ointment of spikenard, very costly,' according to Mark (14: 3, see notes on that passage). It is supposed to have been a rare gum, from India, liquid when taken from the tree. The term 'spikenard' (Gr. *pistic nard*) is differently interpreted as a local name, or as meaning liquid, or pure, genuine. The main point is its preciousness. Comp. the valuation put upon it by Judas: 'three hundred denarii,' about £10 or \$50, a large amount for those days; it would have paid a laborer's wages for nearly a whole year (ch. 20: 2). Herodotus (III. 20) mentions an 'alabastron of fragrant oil,' which Cambyses sent with other royal gifts of gold and purple to the King of Aethiopia.—**Poured it upon his head.** By breaking the neck of the flask, probably by compressing it in her hands. See Mark. The quantity of ointment permitted her to anoint His feet also (John 12: 3). The Oriental custom of reclining at table made the latter easier than the former. The expression used by Mark (14: 8), hints that from the head it flowed over the whole body. It was also usual to wash the feet of honored guests with water, but the anointing of the feet would indicate the highest honor. Mary may have intended only to show

8 she poured it upon his head, as he sat at meat. But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying,
 9 To what purpose is this waste? For this *ointment* might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.
 10 But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work

this honor, but this action symbolized Christ's Messiahship, and had a deeper significance, as our Lord points out (vers. 10, 12).

Ver. 8. **They had indignation**, or 'were sore displeased.' Judas, the embodiment of sordid selfishness in dark contrast with the noble devotion of Mary, was the spokesman, and the instigator of this indignation. The three accounts here show perfect independence. 'The disciples' (Matthew); 'there were some' (Mark); 'one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot' (John). No doubt, all shared the feeling for the time; Mark distinguishes 'some' in a company, of which the disciples formed a part; John mentions the author of the objection, and gives his motives. If John and Judas were reclining at this table in the same relative positions as at the Last Supper, John would probably have heard nothing but the remark of Judas.—**To what purpose is this waste**, (lit., 'perdition'; Judas is afterwards called a 'son of perdition,' John 17: 12). Simon the Pharisee, in the similar case, objected to the character of the woman; here the value of the ointment is thought, as Judas suggested, to have been squandered by this act of Mary. Sacrifices, made out of love to Christ, seem wasteful to the world, and even to the Church when under the influence of a mercantile spirit.

Ver. 9. The best authorities omit 'ointment' here, but it is necessary to supply it.—**Sold for much**. Pliny says that a pound of this ointment cost more than four hundred *denarii* (comp. 'three hundred denarii,' Mark and John).—**Given to the poor**. This suggestion, put forward by Judas, was with him a mere pretext (see John 12: 6); the other disciples may have honestly felt it. Judas, the treasurer of Jesus and His disciples, may have hoped to get the money in his possession, but not necessarily to make off with it; his intention was scarcely ripe enough for such a scheme. Those who hold trust funds, even for benevolent purposes, are often as unscrupulous in adding to them as in increasing their private store.

Ver. 10. **But Jesus perceiving it**, i. e., the whole case, as is evident—**Said unto them**. He answers, not Judas, but the others. Yet this was a rebuke to Judas, and helped to ripen his treacherous design.—**Why trouble ye** (lit. 'are ye giving trouble to') **the woman?** The chief concern is for the affectionate Mary. Her noble act of love had been misjudged, and remarks made which would disquiet or confuse her conscience. (See Mark 14: 2.) She is defended and encouraged first of all. The impulses of genuine love to Christ,

11 upon me. For ye have the poor always with you ;
 12 but me ye have not always. For in that she ¹ poured
 this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me
 13 for burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever ² this
 gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also
 which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a
 memorial of her.

¹ Gr. *cast*.

² Or, *these good tidings*.

or His people, are often thus checked, even by real Christians, who for the time being speak the cold and selfish language of the world.—**A good work.** A noble and beautiful work. Christ, with a refined and delicate sense of the poetic fitness of things, measured the moral quality of the act by the motive, the disciples by its seeming utility. This utilitarian age presents many temptations to follow the lead of Judas.

Ver. 11. **For ye have the poor always with you.** Mark adds: 'and whosoever ye will ye may do them good.'—**But me ye have not always.** His speedy death is foretold; but the main point is, that this opportunity could never return; while the care of the poor would be a daily 'duty to humanity down to the end of time.' The act was justified by the special occasion. It ought not to be cited to defend expensive modes of worship at the cost of neglecting the poor. Such special occasions may, however, recur in our lives. This verse suggests that no reorganization of society will ever banish poverty from the earth. There is but one remedy, namely, by Christ's people recognizing the poor as being 'with them,' and under the impulse of love, like that of Mary, making the care of them the usual expression of that love.

Ver. 12. **To prepare me for burial.** Allusion to the Jewish custom of anointing the dead and the grave clothes; John 19: 40; Luke 23: 56; 2 Chr. 18: 14. Mary may have been aware of the predicted crucifixion, and thought of His actual burial when she anointed Him. If she was conscious of the meaning of her own act, then her love discerned what the disciples could not perceive; if she was not, then the Lord gives to acts of love a significance beyond the intention. The expressions in Mark 14: 8; John 12: 7, imply that she had a presentiment of an impending crisis, after which anointing would be unnecessary or impossible.

Ver. 13. **Verily, etc.** A solemn, weighty preface.—**This gospel.** The tidings of salvation, with special reference to Christ's death, just alluded to.—**In the whole world.** A prediction of the world-wide preaching of His death.—**That also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.** Fulfilled to the letter, fulfilled this moment. John, before he tells of this, speaks of Mary as well known on this account (John 11: 2). It is right to record and remember the good deeds of those who love Christ; but

14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas
15 Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What

when the desire to be put on record enters, the ointment is spoiled. This is the only case where such a promise is made; therefore the incident has a weighty lesson, and holds up a noble example. It has been suggested, that this prophecy points to a *written* record; that the Gospels cannot have been made up from some original document now lost; that Luke could not have seen the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, or he would have inserted this incident to aid in fulfilling the prophecy.

Ver. 14. **Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot.** The principal motive, as is inferred from the strong expression of John (12: 6), was *avarice*, but combined with *ambition*. Other views: that he was undecided, and waited for the chief priests to offer a sufficient inducement; that he felt it his duty to deliver Jesus up to bring on the crisis; that he tried an experiment, to see if our Lord would save Himself by a miracle, or establish a temporal kingdom. None of these theories agree with the strong language used by our Lord in ver. 24, and John 17: 12, or with the positive statement of Luke, that before the interview with the chief priests, 'Satan entered into' him. The selfish, ambitious and hypocritical character of Judas laid him open to Satanic influence, and nothing could do this more effectually than the sordid love of gain. Temporal ambition was a part of his avarice; for, being treasurer of the Twelve, he might hope to be treasurer of the kingdom. His practical and executive talent must have been marked, to secure this position for him, and the scene at Bethany shows that he had influence among his associates. In outward appearance he was probably equal to any of them. As the Lord drew near to Jerusalem, ever telling of His death, Judas could not fail to manifest his real spirit. This was done at the supper in Bethany. The reproof then administered had its effect (hence the order of Matthew and Mark). The triumphal entry of the next day may have encouraged his false hopes; but the subsequent occurrences only disappointed him the more. Seeing the enmity of the rulers, hearing the denunciations of Christ upon them (chaps. 22, 23), convinced from the final prediction (ver. 2), that our Lord would be put to death, he listened to the suggestions of Satan; 'then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot.' The same expression is used by John (13: 27) at the critical moment when Judas left the Passover feast. His remorse, ending in suicide, is readily explained. See ch. 27: 3-5. Even that was Satanic.—**Chief priests.** Luke adds: 'and captains.' The latter were the guardians of the temple and its treasures. This probably took place while the Sanhedrin was assembled (ver. 8); but Judas may have made the offer to both, in the hope of getting a better reward.

Ver. 15. **What are ye willing to give me?** No indication of hesitation. Mark (14: 10) says that he went 'in order that he might

are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him *unto them*.

deliver him up to them.'—**They weighed unto him.** This refers to the actual payment, which probably occurred on the night of the betrayal. Weighing was the old custom, still retained in paying temple-money. The same word is used in the Septuagint translation of the prophetic passage, Zech. 11: 12.—**Thirty pieces of silver.** Silver shekels, each worth four denarii (Attic drachmæ); hence in all 120 denarii, or about twenty dollars. It was the usual price for a common slave, Ex. 21: 32. The sum was a deliberate insult to show contempt for Judas and his Master, but a fulfilment of prophecy, Zech. 11: 12. Our Lord literally 'took upon Him the form of a bond-servant' (Phil. 2: 7), and died the death of a slave and a malefactor, that He might redeem us from the slavery and eternal misery of sin. (Joseph was sold for *twenty* pieces of silver, Gen. 37: 28.) Some think that this was the *earnest money*. But Judas returned thirty pieces (ch. 27: 3), and the answer then given him indicates that the rulers were done with him. He expected perhaps a much greater reward, but no amount of money could explain and justify the betrayal of Jesus.

Ver. 16. **From that time.** Probably Tuesday evening.—**Opportunity.** A time and place suited to the crafty policy of the Sanhedrin. The 'opportunity' was soon offered; only one night intervened.—**To deliver him,** or 'to betray him.' The same word as in vers. 2, 15. Judas was not merely to tell where they could take Him, but himself to be the active agent in transferring Him into the hands of His enemies (see vers. 47–50, 57). So that 'betray' is the real meaning.

The Lord's Supper, vers. 17–30.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 14: 12–26; Luke 22: 7–38; comp. also 1 Cor. 15: 23–26. The preparation for the Passover, vers. 17–19. The actual celebration, during which our Lord announces who would betray Him, vers. 20–25. The institution of the Lord's Supper, vers. 26–30. On the date, see note at the beginning of the chapter.

THE PASSOVER RITES. At the Paschal Supper among the Jews, from ten to twenty persons gathered as one household. The rites of the feast were regulated by the succession of the cups, filled with red wine, commonly mixed with water. 1. *Announcement of the Feast.* The head of the house pronounced the thanksgiving or benediction over the wine and the feast. In the form used, the words: 'fruit of the vine,' occur. The first cup was then drunk by him, followed by the others. Then the washing of hands, after praise. 2. The eating of the bitter herbs, dipped in vinegar or salt water, in remembrance of the sorrows in Egypt. Meanwhile the paschal dishes were brought in—the well-seasoned broth (called charoseth), the unleavened loaves, the festal offer-

CHAPTER 26 : 17-30.

The Lord's Supper.

17 Now on the first *day* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we

ings, and the lamb. All these things were then explained. They sang the first part of the Hallel, or song of praise (Ps. 113, 114), and the second cup was drunk. 3. Then began the feast proper (at which they reclined): the householder took two loaves, broke one in two, laid it upon the whole loaf, blessed it, wrapped it with bitter herbs, dipped it, ate of it, and handed it round with the words: 'This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in Egypt.' He then blessed the paschal lamb, and ate of it; the festal offerings were eaten with the bread, dipped in the broth; and finally the lamb. The thanksgiving for the meal followed the blessing and drinking of the third cup. 4. The remainder of the Hallel was sung (Ps. 115-118), and the fourth cup drunk. Occasionally a fifth cup followed, while Ps. 120-127 were recited; but this was the extreme limit. Little, however, can be deduced from this order in regard to the mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper. It is probable that with the first cup our Lord made the announcement of Luke 22: 17, 18. The second cup may have been devoted to the interpretation of the festal act. The third cup, the cup of thanksgiving, was probably that of the Lord's Supper.

Ver. 17. **On the first day of unleavened bread.** The 14th of Nisan, (Thursday) when the leaven was removed and the paschal lamb was slain (as Mark and Luke add for Gentile readers). In the *evening* of this day, after the 15th had begun, the Passover was eaten. Hence Josephus in one place calls the 15th, in another the 14th of Nisan the first day of the feast. See Ex. 12: 18, 19; 23: 15. The feast lasted seven days, or counting in the 14th, eight days (Jos., *Ant.* II. 15, § 1). We must always keep in mind that the Jews counted the days from sunset to sunset. (The view of Mansel, Westcott, Farrar and others, that our Lord ate the Passover on the 13th, that is a day earlier than the legal time, is in itself extremely improbable and contrary to the plain meaning of all the Synoptists, and only devised to harmonize them with a wrong interpretation of some passages in John. See the introductory note to ch. 26.)—**The disciples.** It is probable that they came with the intention of inquiring on this point, and their thought was answered by sending Peter and John with the command mentioned in Luke (22: 8), to which they responded: **Where wilt thou, etc.** As strangers they must join some household in the city. The householder kept the lamb from the 10th day of the month; he presented it in the temple 'between the evenings,' i. e., between three and five o'clock in the afternoon of the fourteenth, and himself slew it. The priests, standing in a row extending to the altar, received the blood in silver basins, which they passed from hand to hand, until at the foot of the altar the blood was poured out, whence it flowed by an underground conduit into the Kedron. This ceremony took the place of

18 make ready for thee to eat the passover? And he said,
 Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The
¹ Master saith, My time is at hand; I keep the pass-
 19 over at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples
 did as Jesus appointed them; and they made ready
 20 the passover. Now when even was come, he was sit-
 21 ting at meat with the twelve ²disciples; and as they
 were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one

¹ Or, *Teacher*.² Many authorities, some ancient, omit *disciples*.

the sprinkling of the blood on the door-posts. The householder then removed the skin and the fat from the lamb; the latter was burned on the altar by the priests, the former was carried home bound about the lamb. As the number of lambs was very great the persons bringing them were admitted in detachments. The disciples asked where they should find a householder who was ready to do this, and whom they, as his guests, would assist. The accounts of Mark and Luke intimate that most of the preparations were already made.

Ver. 18. **Go into the city.** Addressed to 'two of his disciples' (Mark), 'Peter and John' (Luke).—**To such a man.** The name is not given. The Gr. word is used when the writer knows, but does not care to mention, the name of the person, here perhaps from regard to his safety, or to prevent Judas from premature betrayal. Mark and Luke give the sign by which they should find the right person; a man should meet them, bearing a pitcher of water, and following him, they should address the master of the house he entered. Possibly the householder was a believer, perhaps secretly like Nicodemus; of a previous understanding there is no hint. Such hospitality was usual on such occasions.—**The Master saith.** The man must have recognized to some extent our Lord's authority.—**My time is at hand.** The time of suffering; not the time of my Passover, over against the ordinary time of observing it. How far either the disciples or the householder understood this, is uncertain.

Ver. 19. Comp. the fuller accounts of Mark (14: 14-16) and Luke (22: 11-13).

Ver. 20. **Even.** Luke: 'the hour.' Both point to the regular time.—**He was sitting at meat,** or, 'reclining at table,' in the centre of the middle court, John next to Him and leaning on His bosom, Peter probably on the other side. The original requirement was, to eat the Passover standing (Exod. 12: 11). The Jews altered this when they came to the land of promise and rest.

Ver. 21. **And as they were eating.** The four Evangelists are entirely independent in their accounts of the Last Supper. Luke (17: 15-18) records the expression of our Lord's desire to eat the Passover with them; and this seems to have been the first incident, attending

22 of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it
 23 I, Lord? And he answered and said, He that dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray
 24 me. The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it ¹ for that man if he

¹ Gr. *for him if that man.*

the first cup (the announcement of the feast). The washing of the disciples' feet is mentioned by John only (13: 4-12), and this preceded the announcement of the betrayer (John 13: 21-30) which our verse narrates. The strife as to who should be greatest, mentioned by Luke only (22: 21-30), seems to have been the immediate occasion of the washing of the disciples' feet; hence the probable order was: (1) the expression of desire; (2) this strife; (3) the washing of the disciples' feet; (4) the announcement that one should betray Him, mentioned by all four Evangelists.—**One of you shall betray me.** This awful announcement would give Judas an opportunity of repentance. But it produced no effect upon him. All others were startled and saddened.

Ver. 22. **Is it I, Lord?** Comp. the fuller details in John 13: 18-30. The Greek form of this question implies a denial (= It is *not* I?); hence the hypocrisy of Judas in asking the question by himself, after the others (ver. 25). Yet every Christian may ask such a question at the Lord's table. It is this moment of intense commotion and anxiety of the disciples which Leonardo da Vinci represents in his immortal picture of the Last Supper.

Ver. 23. **He that dipped his hand with me in the dish.** The act had just passed by one near Him. There were probably a number of dishes, or bowls, distributed along the table, containing the broth called *charoseth*, prepared of dates, figs, and other fruits. Even this statement may not have definitely pointed out Judas to the others. There is a pathetic tenderness in the language (comp. Ps. 41: 9, quoted in John 13: 18).

Ver. 24. **The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him.** Luke: 'As it has been determined.' The prophecy implied the purpose. Comp. the same language of Peter, Acts 1: 16; 4: 28.—**But.** God's purposes include our freedom (comp. Acts 2: 23).—**Woe unto that man,** Stier: 'The most affecting and melting *lamentation of love*, which feels the woe as much as holiness requires or will admit.' Our Lord seems to forget His own woes in pity for this man.—**Good were it for that man,** etc. A proverbial expression for the most terrible destiny, forbidding the thought of any deliverance however re-

25 had not been born. And Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him,

mote. This and ch. 25: 46 are the strongest passages for eternal punishment. An endless bliss even after ages of woe would be preferable to non-existence.

Ver. 25. **And Judas**, etc. Mentioned by Matthew only. John, who was next to our Lord (John 13: 23), gives a more detailed account of what he saw and heard; which probably took place before the question of Judas, after the giving of the sop. The hypocrisy or reckless defiance of that question at such a time is an indication that, 'after the sop Satan entered into him' (John 13: 27).—**Thou hast said.** An affirmative answer after Hebrew usage (see ver. 64; comp. Mark 14: 62), uttered in close connection with the words: 'What thou doest, do quickly' (John 13: 27). The misunderstanding of these words and the immediate withdrawal of Judas (which is implied in ver. 47 and expressly stated by John, 13: 30), prevented the disciples from seeing the purpose of Judas for which he went out (John 13: 29).

Judas not present at the communion. Matthew and Mark place the institution after the announcement respecting the betrayal. Luke hints at the latter after the account of the former, but his order is obviously less exact. John shows that Judas went out after the announcement, but does not mention the institution at all. It is most probable that Judas went out (John 13: 30) *before* the institution. The majority of the fathers assume the presence of Judas as the representative of unworthy communicants; Protestant commentators are divided. It seems incredible that our Lord knowing him to be a traitor should have given him the tokens of holy communion.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. This feast of love, designed to bind the hearts of Christians to their Lord and to each other, has, like the person of our Lord Himself, been made the occasion of controversies, alike unrefreshing and fruitless. The passages to be compared are: Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29. Our Lord on this occasion founded a permanent ordinance in the Christian Church; a sacrament, pointing to His death in the past, to His life in the present, to His coming in the future; of which it is a Christian duty to partake, and a sin to partake unworthily; it being a communion of believers as members of the same body of Christ (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17). The main point respects the meaning of the words: 'This is my body' (τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου). 'This' in the original is neuter, 'bread' (ἄρτος) is masculine. 'This' does not mean 'this bread,' but 'bread in this service.' The copula 'is' may not have been expressed in the Aramaic language used by our Lord, and at any rate cannot decide the relation between the subject 'this' and the predicate 'my body.' For in all languages 'is' may express according to the nature of the case or the context either a real or a figurative relation, no matter where the figure really lies, whether in the subject or the predicate. The figurative meaning of 'is'—signifies represents, is very evident in many passages, e. g. Matt. 15: 19; Gal. 4: 24; Rev. 1: 20.

'My body' must be understood of the living body of Jesus then visibly present before the disciples and distinct from the bread, but soon to be offered as a sacrifice; hence the addition (in Luke): 'which is given for you,' and the addition to 'blood:' 'which is shed,' etc. These remarks furnish a basis for the proper interpretation.

The different theories on the Lord's Supper may be reduced to four, and these again to two:

1. LITERAL interpretations:

(a) The *Roman Catholic* (called *transubstantiation*).

(b) The *Lutheran* (usually called *consubstantiation*).

2. FIGURATIVE interpretations:

(a) The *Zwinglian* (symbolical presence).

(b) The *Calvinistic*, or *orthodox Reformed* (spiritual real or dynamic presence).

The two literal interpretations agree in maintaining a *corporeal* real presence and an *oral* manducation of the very body and blood of Christ by *all* communicants unworthy as well as worthy, though with opposite effects. The two figurative interpretations deny the corporeal presence and understand the eating of Christ's body to be a *spiritual* eating by faith, and consequently confined to *believing* communicants.

1. Literal interpretations:

(a) The *Roman Catholic* view: 'This is—*really and essentially*—My body—though apparently bread.' It would be more fully expressed thus: 'This bread *has become* My body, and hence *is* no more bread, but my body only, though under the deceptive form of bread.' It implies a change of the elements into the very body and blood of Christ, but the outward form and attributes remain, as the sense of sight, smell and taste testify. This change is believed to be repeated wherever and whenever mass is celebrated by a priest. A miracle as great as the feeding of the five thousand, and the change of water into wine at Cana. But—not to mention the grave doctrinal objections—the interpretation after all is not strictly literal, and is forced to substitute the wine for 'the cup' in the words of Luke and Paul, and blood for 'the new covenant in My blood.'

(b) The *Lutheran* view declares that the body of Christ is present *in, with, and under* the bread. It seeks to avoid the error of the Roman doctrine and to save the testimony of the senses (sight, smell, taste), by interpreting our Lord's words: 'This is *in a certain sense and partially*, but not exclusively, My body.' But this, too, is not literal; it involves the figure of synecdoche (by which a part is put for the whole), and the philosophical difficulty of two substances occupying the same space at the same time, and the ubiquity of Christ's body.

2. The *figurative* or *symbolical* sense. 'This *signifies* or *represents* My body,' or 'This is a *figure* of My body.' This view implies that the bread and wine remain bread and wine in substance as well as in form. Comp. 1 Cor. 11: 26-28, where the bread which is eaten is spoken of as 'bread' three times.

(a) The *Zwinglian* view: The Lord's Supper is a *memorial service*, a commemoration of Christ's atoning death, and nothing more. The objection to this view is that it does not exhaust the phrase as a figure. When Christ says: 'I am the vine,' 'I am the door,' etc., the *lower object*, used as a figure, has attached to it a higher spiritual sense. In the Lord's Supper the lower object is made a continued sign, emblem, symbol of the greatest spiritual truth. The consequences of this bald view are shown in the lower estimate of the sacrament, even as a memorial service, which it has almost invariably produced.

26 Thou hast said.—And as they were eating, Jesus took
¹ bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the
 disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.
 27 And he took ² a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to

¹ Or, a loaf.

² Some ancient authorities read *the cup*.

(b) *The Calvinistic view.* This maintains the spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper over against the literal interpretations, and His real presence over against the Zwinglian view. It brings in the agency of the Holy Spirit who communicates the life-giving power of Christ's humanity to the believer (John 6). The Lord's Supper is therefore a feast of the living union of believers with Christ, and a communion of believers with each other. It signifies, and also *seals*, such union and communion, becoming to the believing heart a means of grace, and to the unworthy partaker a means of condemnation (1 Cor. 11: 27-30). By this is not meant that it conveys, in and of itself, grace and condemnation, any more than in the case of preaching, prayer, the reading of the Scriptures, singing Psalms. The language and feelings of Christians, when engaged in the solemn service, assume as much as this.

Happily, the blessing of the sacrament does not depend upon exegesis or any human theory of its nature and import, but upon childlike faith and trust in Christ as our once crucified and ever living Redeemer. Christians of all creeds find in it spiritual nourishment by communing with their Lord and Saviour, the living bread from heaven.

Ver. 26. **As they were eating.** The meal had been interrupted by the announcement of the treason. Hence the re-assumption of ver. 21. The institution of the Lord's Supper must be put at the close of the paschal supper, hence the words 'after supper' in Luke and Paul. —**Took bread.** The unleavened cakes, used on these occasions, easily broken.—**And blessed.** As was the custom. Luke and Paul say: 'gave thanks,' which is the same thing. The word 'eucharist' ('thanksgiving') is a common name of the Lord's Supper, as a feast of thanksgiving. Our Lord probably did not Himself partake.—**Take, eat; this is my body.** On the different interpretations, see introductory note above. Luke and Paul add: 'This do in remembrance of Me.' Paul makes a similar addition at the distribution of the cup: 'This do as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.' The Lord's Supper is therefore—whatever else it may be—a commemoration of the atoning death of Christ. This command has ever since been observed without interruption in the Christian world, and will be to the end of time. The Lord's Supper is a perpetual and omnipresent witness of our Lord's death for the remission of sins.

Ver. 27. **And he took a cup.** Luke and Paul: 'after supper.' Although the institution may have been independent of the regular mode of celebrating the Passover, the giving of thanks mentioned here, taken in connection with 1 Cor. 10: 16 ('the cup of blessing'), indicates that this was a cup of thanksgiving, hence probably the *third* cup of the Passover feast.—**Drink ye all of it.** 'All' is significant and condemns the Roman usage, which denies the cup to the laity.

28 them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of ¹the² covenant, which is shed for many unto remis-
 29 sion of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink*
 henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day

¹ Or, *the testament*.

² Many ancient authorities insert *new*.

* For 'I will not drink' read 'I shall not drink.' Similarly in Mark 14: 26; Luke 22: 16, 18.—*Am. Com.*

Ver. 28. **For this is my blood of the covenant** (not 'new testament,' E. V., following the Lat. Vulgate; hence the misnomer: 'The New and the Old Testament' for Covenant. The Gr. *diatheke* means always 'covenant,' except perhaps Heb. 9: 15-17). Paul gives instead the words: 'This cup (which contains the wine) is the new covenant in My blood.' The wine, poured out, is a symbol of the blood of Christ shed for us. Both here and in Mark the word 'new' is omitted by the best authorities, though it occurs in the accounts of Luke and Paul. It was still the same covenant, though 'new.' Hence as the old covenant forbade the drinking of blood, it could not be commanded here in a literal sense. As Moses (Exod. 24: 8) sprinkled blood upon the people and said: 'Behold the blood of the covenant,' our Lord points directly to the shedding of His blood on the cross as 'the blood of the covenant.' He thus comforted His disciples by explaining His death to them, and we can find no blessing in it apart from this explanation.—**Which is shed** (or 'being shed') **for many unto remission of sins.** Our Lord here declares, with reference to His own death, that it was an actual dying for others, to the end that their sins might be pardoned. The blood is a symbol of life; the wine, the emblem of Christ's blood, is drunk, to signify also our new life through the blood of Christ, just as the eating of the bread sets forth nourishment derived from Christ, whose body has been broken for us. The central fact is the atoning death of Christ, which we *commemorate*; the present blessing is the assurance conveyed by visible signs, that we receive truly, though spiritually, Christ, with all His benefits, and are nourished by His life into life eternal. The word 'many' is here opposed to 'few' (not to 'all'), as in ch. 20: 28, and is equivalent to 'all'; see 1 Tim. 2: 6: 'Who gave Himself a ransom for all.' Comp. 1 John 2: 2.

Ver. 29. **I shall not drink henceforth.** He is done with earthly rites, and at this sad moment points them to a future reunion at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The ordinance now receives its prophetic meaning (comp. 1 Cor. 11: 26: 'till He come'), directing believers to the perfect vision and fruition of that time, through the foretaste which this sacrament is designed to give.—**Drink it new,** in quality (*καινόν*), not new in time (*νέον*).—**My Father's kingdom.** Not to be weakened into 'in the Christian dispensation.' It points to the victory of the Church, not to its conflicts; and the con-

when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives.

CHAPTER 26: 31-35.

Prediction of the Death and Resurrection, and of Peter's Denial.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be ¹offended

¹ Gr. *caused to stumble.*

tinued celebration of the Lord's Supper is an expression of assured victory on the part of His militant Church.

Ver. 30. **And when they had sung a hymn** (Ps. 115-118), **they went out unto the mount of Olives**, to Gethsemane (ver. 36). Between the hymn and the going out of the city and down the valley of the Kedron, we must insert the farewell discourses and the sacerdotal prayer recorded by John (chs. 14-17), who was nearest to the Lord, and treasured them up in his faithful memory. The place of eating the Passover was probably kept concealed, to give time for that closing interview, appropriately called 'the Holy of Holies.'

Prediction of the Death and Resurrection, and of Peter's Denial, vers. 31-35.

THE PREDICTION OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION AND OF PETER'S DENIAL, vers. 31-35. Parallel passages: Mark 14: 26-31; Luke 22: 31-34; John 16: 32; 13: 37, 38. Luke inserts a similar prediction, in connection with the incident about the two swords, which must have taken place before the departure. John too places the prediction (ch. 13: 38) before the farewell discourse (chaps. 14-17), the *wholes* of which must have been delivered in the room. If there was but one intimation of Peter's denial, it was at the point where it is placed by Luke. The order then is: After the singing of the hymn, the prediction about Peter; then the incident about the swords (in Luke); next John 14; then a rising to go (John 14: 31); then the remainder of the discourse and the prayer (John 15-17); then the actual going out. Matthew and Mark, however, connect the prediction of Peter's denial with another important prophecy, not mentioned by Luke and John, and with difficulty fitted into their narratives. They indicate that the prediction about Peter was occasioned by something else, and record a less presumptuous answer from him. It is possible, however, that our Lord gave *two* intimations on this point, the first mentioned by Luke and John (as above), the second by Matthew and Mark, uttered on the way out to Gethsemane. We then have, what would scarcely be lacking, a conversation on the way. The phrase 'this night' favors this view.

in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered
 32 abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before
 33 you into Galilee. But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be ¹offended in thee, I will never be
 34 ¹offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto

¹ Gr. *caused to stumble*.

Ver. 31. **Shall be offended**; 'made to stumble,' 'fall away.'—**In me, i. e.**, His betrayal and sufferings, **this night**, would be made by them an occasion of stumbling, a snare; they would forsake and deny Him.—**For it is written**, Zech. 13: 7. A very remarkable Messianic prophecy which begins with the promise of 'a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.' Our Lord, knowing what would come, knew also that it was designed to fulfil this prophecy.—**I will smite the Shepherd**, etc. Words of Jehovah who speaks of the Shepherd as His 'fellow,' i. e., His intimate associate. In the prophecy: 'Smite,' a command. The change suggests that the coming sufferings were not only at the hands of men, but in some proper sense inflicted by God Himself; God smote Him instead of His people (comp. Is. 53: 4-10). 'The Shepherd' is Christ, and in the original prophecy meant the Messiah (comp. Zech. 11: 7-14; 12: 10).—**And the sheep of the flock**; the Apostles, but with a wider reference also to the Jewish people.—**Scattered abroad**. This occurred both in the case of the disciples, and of the Jews, after they had rejected the smitten Shepherd.

Ver. 32. **But after I am raised up**. The resurrection is again announced, but soon forgotten again by the Apostles.—**I will go before you**. The figure of a shepherd is continued. Comp. the remaining words of Zech. 13: 7: 'And I will turn my hand upon the little ones.'—**Into Galilee**. In Galilee He collected His disciples: chap. 28: 16; John 21: 1 Cor. 15: 6. This gathering of the scattered flock was the pastoral work after the resurrection; hence the other interviews in Jerusalem are not referred to.

Ver. 33. **But Peter answered**. Instead of laying hold of the comforting part of the promise, Peter reverts to the first part.—**If all . . . I will never be offended**. The utterance of affection, yet of self-confidence and arrogance, since 'all' refers to the other disciples. Hence he was allowed to fall lower than the rest. This reply differs from that given by Luke and John. Its tone points to a previous declaration respecting his want of fidelity.

Ver. 34. **Before the cock crow**. Mark (whose account is fuller, probably from the mouth of Peter): 'Before a cock crow twice.' The first cock crow is about midnight, and heard by few; the second,

thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt
 35 deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must
 die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also
 said all the disciples.

CHAPTER 26: 36-46.

The Agony in Gethsemane.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto ¹a place called
 Gethsemane, and saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here,

¹ Gr. an enclosed piece of ground.

about three in the morning, is usually called 'cock-crowing' (comp. Mark 13; 35). The latter is referred to here: Our Lord meant the actual cock-crowing to be a warning for Peter (ver. 75). It is said that the inhabitants of Jerusalem kept no fowls because they scratched up unclean worms. But this is not certain, and such a prohibition would not affect the Roman residents.—**Deny me thrice.** Deny knowing me (Luke 22: 34), a denial of any relation to Christ, virtually a denial of faith in Him, as the Son of God; in contrast with the previous confession (chap. 16: 16).

Ver. 35. **Even if I must die with thee.** In Luke and John, something like this precedes the prediction of the denial: in Matthew and Mark it occurs at this point. This favors the view that two different occasions are referred to.—**Likewise said also all the disciples.** The ardent spokesman influenced the rest. Their asseverations were probably not so strong, but were as inconsiderate. So 'all' forsok Him (ver. 56), but Peter alone denied Him.

The Agony in Gethsemane, vers. 36-46.

Parallel passages: Mark 14: 32-42; Luke 22: 39-46. This conflict presents our Lord in the reality of His manhood, in weakness and humiliation, but it is impossible to account for it unless we admit His Divine nature. Had He been a mere man, His knowledge of the sufferings before Him could not have been sufficient to cause such sorrow. The human fear of death will not explain it. As a real man, He was capable of such a conflict. But it took place after the serenity of the Last Supper and sacerdotal prayer, and before the sublime submission in the palace and judgment hall. The conflict therefore was a *specific* agony of itself. He felt the whole burden and mystery of the world's sin, and encountered the fiercest assaults of Satan. Otherwise, in this hour this Person, so powerful, so holy, seems to fall below the heroism of martyrs in His own cause. His sorrow did not spring from His own life, His memory or His fears, but from the vicarious nature of the conflict. The agony was a bearing

of the weight and sorrow of our sins, in loneliness, in anguish of soul threatening to crush His body, yet borne triumphantly, because in submission to His Father's will. Three times our Lord appeals to that will, as purposing His anguish; that purpose of God in regard to the loveliest, best of men, can be reconciled with justice and goodness in God in but one way: that it was necessary for our redemption. Mercy forced its way through justice to the sinner. Our Lord suffered anguish of soul for sin, that it might never rest on us. To deny this is in effect, not only to charge our Lord with undue weakness, but to charge God with needless cruelty. 'Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.' Isa. 53: 4, 5.

Ver. 36. Unto a place called Gethsemane. Luke (22: 39) says in general 'to the mount of Olives,' though hinting at a customary place; John (17: 1, 2) tells us that it was a 'garden' beyond the brook Kedron, known to Judas, 'for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples.' 'Place' means 'piece of land,' 'field' (see John 4: 5; Acts 1: 18, etc.). 'Gethsemane' (a Hebrew word) means 'Oil-press.' It was probably an enclosed olive-yard, containing a press and garden tower, perhaps a dwelling-house. It was at the western slope of the Mount of Olives beyond the Kedron ('black brook') a winter torrent so called from its dark waters, which were still more darkened by the blood from the foot of the altar in the temple (see note on ver. 17 and on John 18: 1). David, betrayed by Ahithophel, one of his body guard, crossed the same Kedron, in his flight from Absalom (2 Sam. 15: 23). The spot now pointed out as Gethsemane lies on the right of the path to the Mount of Olives and is in charge of the Franciscan monks who offer to visitors olive leaves and flowers. The wall has been restored. Eight olive trees remain, all of them very large and old (each one has paid a special tax since A. D. 686), but scarcely of the time of our Lord, since Titus, during the siege of Jerusalem, had all the trees of the district cut down. There is no evidence to prove, and no good reason to deny, the identity of the spot. But the Greek Gethsemane is a short distance further north and marked by a rude chapel in a rock, which some suppose to have been the interior part of the same garden and the precise spot of the agony. Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*) thinks the garden was in a more secluded place further on, to the left of the path. The name has been connected with the bruising of our Lord for our sins. See Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, p. 274.—**His disciples.** The remaining eight.—**Sit ye here, i e., 'stay here.'** These eight would form, as it were, a watch against premature surprise.—**While I go yonder,** to a more retired spot, perhaps under the shade of an olive tree, out of the moonlight. (The Passover was at full moon.)—**And pray.** Our Lord speaks of the coming struggle as prayer. He had prayed for the disciples; now He prays for Himself. So Abraham (Gen. 22: 5), when he, almost on the same spot, was going to the greatest trial of his faith.

37 while I go yonder and pray. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be 38 sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: 39 abide ye here, and watch with me. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Ver. 37. **Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.** These three witnesses of His Divine glory on the Mount, were chosen to witness His human anguish in the valley. Yet they did not fully witness it (ver. 40). Their nearness seems to have been in some way a comfort to Him, though they could not help Him.—**And began to be sorrowful and sore troubled.** He was overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish and felt the concentrated sin and woe of all mankind. We can form no conception of this mysterious conflict with all the powers of darkness. It was worse than death itself.

Ver. 38. **My soul is exceeding sorrowful.** Comp. John 12: 27. Christ had a truly human soul capable of all the emotions of joy and sorrow. His sorrow is more natural than Stoic apathy, and brings Him nearer to us as a comforter in all our sorrows. A sufferer all His life, His sufferings now increased, **even unto death.** His human body would have given way under the sorrow of His human soul, had not strength been imparted by the ministrations of an angel (Luke 22: 43). Soul and body interacted in Him as in us. Luke (22: 44) relates more particularly the physical effects of this agony.—**Abide ye here, and watch with me.** He would have friends near Him, but does not say: *Pray* with me; in this conflict He must be alone. His command was not merely to keep awake out of sympathy with Him, but to be on their guard against coming dangers. Even then He showed care for them.

Ver. 39. **And he went forward a little.** 'About a stone's cast' (Luke 22: 41), since that seems to refer to this second withdrawal. Into the Holy of Holies He goes alone. Luke, a physician, gives more vivid statements.—**Fell on his face.** Luke: 'kneeled down.' Kneeling and prostration were scarcely distinguished in the east.—**If it be possible.** Mark (14: 36): 'Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee;' Luke (22: 42): 'if Thou be willing.' The bitterness of this cup was so great, that He desired its removal, but even this desire was subordinated to the holy will of His Father.—**This cup.** Comp. chap. 20: 22. All His sufferings, including the specific sorrow of that hour. All the predictions our Lord had previously made and the events of the same evening, show that it was not merely a fear of death.—**Pass away from me.** God answered the

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not
41 watch with me one hour? ¹ Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing,

¹ Or, *Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not.*

prayer by giving Him strength to drink the bitter cup. The removal of the suffering was not 'possible' in the moral government of God. The sorrows were necessary, not for Him, but for us.—**Not as I will, but as thou wilt.** The key note of every true prayer, and the condition of its answer. In this real struggle, *His will* was still fixed in its obedience to that of His Father. As the God-man He fore-knew all the bitterness of the cup, and His human will desired relief, but that will was over-ruled by the Divine purpose, which coincided with His Father's will and led to submission. A proper prayer of faith and submission to God's will is always answered, but often at a different time and in a different and better manner than we conceive of.

Ver. 40. **Sleeping.** Not sound asleep, as we may infer from ver. 48, but in a dozing, drowsy state. Excessive sorrow has this result (comp. Luke 22: 45). Spiritual influences, too, exhaust the body. Their drowsiness does not prove insensibility; they had, however, been warned to watch.—**Unto Peter**, who had promised most.—**What**, or, 'so then.' This indicates disappointment, if not displeasure. His chosen friends had failed to comfort Him in this crisis.

Ver. 41. **Watch and pray.** The care for them, which was involved in the rebuke even, now becomes most prominent. They needed then, and as the original implies what is habitual, always to watch, to be on their guard, as well as to pray. And that for themselves: **that ye enter not into temptation.** This includes an entertaining of the temptation. Others explain it: a temptation greater than ye can bear. Luke, whose account is at this point more condensed, inserts this admonition in a different place (22: 40, 46).—**The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.** 'The spirit,' i. e., the human spirit, but only as quickened by the Holy Spirit. Of itself it could have no such willingness. In the Epistles the word 'flesh' generally means the whole depraved condition of man; but here, where it is contrasted with the human spirit, it probably refers to the material part of man's nature. The human spirit (when acted upon by the Holy Spirit), is willing to do the present duty, but the flesh, the body, which is weak (and weakened through sin), hinders and often produces failure. That was the case with the disciples. Nor is an application to our Lord forbidden. In Him, though weighed down by sorrow, so that the flesh almost gave way to death in its weakness ('even unto death'), the willingness of the spirit triumphed. Possibly there is a hint of the conflict in believers between the 'spirit' and the depraved nature ('flesh'), even though in this case its actings were through the weary body.

42 but the flesh is weak. Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cannot
 43 pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes
 44 were heavy. And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words.
 45 Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed unto the
 46 hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

Ver. 42. **Again a second time.** Mark (14: 39): 'spake the same words.' The prayer is substantially the same, but the form indicates more fully the resignation and self-sacrifice: the cup had not passed away, He must drink it, and He says: **Thy will be done.**

Ver. 43. **For their eyes were heavy.** Drowsiness, not deep sleep, is meant; Mark adds (14: 40): 'and they knew not what they should answer Him.'

Ver. 44. **The third time, saying again the same words.** Now full strength came to enable Him to meet the sufferings before Him.

Ver. 45. **Sleep on now.** Not 'do ye still sleep?' but a permission, *i. e.*, Sleep on now, if you can. It is not ironical; the circumstances forbid that. They could not take their rest, for the betrayer was coming.—**Behold the hour is at hand.** The hour of His enemies, the hour of darkness (Luke 22: 53), but with special reference to the approach of the betrayer. It is not certain that the band of Judas had already appeared.—**Is betrayed into the hands of sinners.** Our Lord had predicted (chap. 20: 18, 19), that He would be delivered to the chief priests and Gentiles; 'sinners' here includes both. There is special significance in the choice of this word at such a time.

Ver. 46. **Arise, i. e.**, rouse yourselves, not simply, stand up.—**Let us be going.** Both expressions imply haste, not necessarily terror. The conflict is over, the spirit of submission reigns; yet He is anxious that the trial of the moment of His betrayal should be over. His advancing to meet His betrayer may have been to rejoin and protect the eight disciples at the entrance of the garden.—**Behold, etc.** The band of Judas now appears.

CHAPTER 26 : 47-56.

The Betrayal.

- 47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the
 twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with
 48 swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of
 the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a
 sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take

The Betrayal. Vers. 47-56.

Parallel passages: Mark 14: 43-50; Luke 22: 47-53; John 18: 3-12. All the Evangelists narrate this event with interesting variety in details, showing their entire independence, and quite natural in such a scene of excitement. It shows the glory and majesty of our Lord even in such an hour; the reference to the fulfilment of the Scriptures (vers. 54-56) confirms the view that these events were ordained and permitted by God.

Ver. 47. **Judas** knew the place (John 18: 2). He had probably represented to the rulers the ease with which our Lord could now be taken, without provoking a popular tumult, and overruled their decision to wait till after the feast (ver. 5). This haste shows that he was hurried on by a Satanic impulse.—**One of the twelve.** Usually thus termed; here the phrase emphasizes the treachery.—**With him a great multitude.** Composed of a detachment of the Roman cohort stationed in the castle Antonia (John 18: 3, 12: 'the band,' or cohort, consisting of from two hundred to a thousand men); of the Jewish temple-guard of the Levites (John 18: 3, 12; Luke 22: 52: 'the captains of the temple'); of others, including servants and dependents of the high-priest (ver. 51), and, in all probability, some fanatical chief priests and 'elders' also (Luke 22: 52), who wished to witness the religious (!) capture. Roman and Jewish authorities combined against the one unarmed Jesus.—**With swords and staves** (or 'clubs'); the former in the hands of the soldiers, the latter in the hands of the rabble accompanying them. The size of the crowd may have been a recognition of our Lord's power, or designed to produce the impression on Pilate that some great plot was to be crushed, and on the people that Jesus was a great criminal. They had lanterns and torches (John 18: 3), for, although the moon was full, they expected to take Him in a secret recess.—**From the chief-priests and elders of the people,** the national authorities, at whose wish the Roman authorities acted.

Ver. 48. **Gave them a sign,** previously agreed upon; comp. Mark 14: 44, 'had given.'—**Whomsoever I shall kiss.** The kiss among the ancients was a sign of affectionate and cordial intimacy, and particularly a token of fidelity, Gen. 29: 11. It was the customary greeting among the early Christians, Rom. 16: 16; 1 Thess. 5: 26.

49 him. And straightway he came to Jesus, and said,
 50 Hail, Rabbi; and ¹kissed him. And Jesus said unto
 him, Friend, *do* that for which thou art come. Then
 they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.
 51 And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched
 out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the

¹ Gr. *kissed him much.*

—**Take him.** Judas may have feared He might still elude them, either by some exercise of His acknowledged power, or with the help of His disciples. If the incidents mentioned by John (18: 4-9) took place on the first appearance of the crowd, most of those present already knew which was Jesus, and fell on the ground when He said: 'I am He' (words of cheer to His disciples, words of terror to His enemies then and on the day of judgment). But the signal agreed upon would be necessary to point Him out to the Roman soldiers, who might not have understood the conversation, or had orders to act upon this sign.

Ver. 49. **And straightway.** John 18: 5 indicates that Judas appeared at first as if not directly belonging to the crowd, but soon moved in advance of them, as they fell back. He was probably excited as well as dissembling.—**Hail, Rabbi.** A deceitful address.—**Kissed him** (*κατεφίλησεν*, kissed him eagerly). A stronger word than that used in the last verse (so in Mark's account). Meyer: 'The sign was the simple kissing; but the performance was more emphatic, a caressing, corresponding with the purpose of Judas to make sure, and with the excitement of his feelings.'

Ver. 50. **Friend.** In Greek a term of companionship (comrade, fellow), rather than friendship. Here it mildly introduces a censure, as our 'good friend.' So also ch. 20: 13 and 22: 12. Our Lord did not turn away, in holy indignation, from this Judas kiss. His meekness and gentleness, under the greatest provocation, surpasses even the standard which He holds up for His disciples.—**Do that for which thou art come!** A slight change of reading makes the common translation ('Wherefore art thou come?') incorrect. The expression is elliptical, and may be either an exclamation or a question: 'Is it this for which thou art come?' The former accords much better with the emotion natural at such a time. In any case it is a stinging rebuke to Judas.—**Laid hands,** etc. This does not imply undue violence. He was probably not bound until afterwards (comp. John 18: 12).

Ver. 51. **One of them.** Peter, as was well known (John 18: 26), but only John gives the name.—**Drew his sword.** According to Luke (22: 49), the question was first asked: 'Shall we smite with the sword?' Peter, always hasty, did not wait for the answer. They had two swords (Luke 22: 38), whoever had the other one was not so

¹servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear.
 52 Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword
 into its place: for all they that take the sword shall
 53 perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I can-
 not beseech my Father, and he shall even now send
 54 me more than twelve legions of angels? How then

¹ Gr. *bond-servant*.

rash.—**The servant of the high-priest.** Named 'Malchus' (King), John 18: 10. The earlier Evangelists omit his name, perhaps from motives of prudence.—**His ear.** The 'right ear' (Luke and John). Peter was no swordsman, for he missed his blow. In any case carnal weapons used in Christ's cause deprive His opponents of 'ears,' i. e., of willingness to listen to the truth. Christ's grace may restore this willingness, as it healed this ear. The healing is mentioned only by Luke (the physician). The double effect of Peter's rashness, damage to Malchus and danger to himself, were thus removed.

Ver. 52. **Thy sword; not mine!—Into its place, i. e., the sheath** (John 18: 11). Peter was still standing with drawn sword.—**For all they that take the sword.** A general proposition in regard to unwarranted recourse to measures of violence.—**Shall perish with the sword.** The special reference is to Peter. In taking the sword he had been imprudent, revolutionary, cruel. His life would have been forfeited to the sword, had not our Lord interfered and removed the effects of his blow. As a rule, the violent perish violently. More than a million of Jews perished for taking the sword against Rome. The Church, a spiritual body, may use spiritual weapons only (comp. 2 Cor. 10: 3, 4); never carnal and violent measures. A condemnation of all persecution. The Roman church has imitated Peter in the use of the sword against heretics through the civil power. Some Protestant churches have done the same, and deserve the same censure, and even more, when they disown the principle of persecution.

Ver. 53. **Or thinkest thou.** An appeal to Peter's faith, and also a declaration of power and an exhibition of patience.—**Even now, at this crisis when all seems to be lost.—Twelve legions.** He numbers His hosts by 'legions,' as did the Romans (in whose hands he was). A legion included ten cohorts or companies (6,000 men or more). The Latin word is used here as the symbol of the Roman power. 'Twelve;' in allusion to the twelve persons (Himself and the eleven) opposed to this midnight band; a legion for each; a mighty host, all-sufficient to help them. Christ, in mercy to men, chose to gain His victory by suffering and death. Violence against the conscience, as well as against the body, reacts upon those employing it.

Ver. 54. **How then, if I should invoke this aid, which I might**

should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?
 55 In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye
 come out as against a robber with swords and staves
 to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and
 56 ye took me not. But all this is come to pass, that the
 scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then
 all the disciples left him, and fled.

do, **should the Scriptures be fulfilled?** Our Lord shows His patience and submission; even while asserting his majesty.—**That thus it must be.** According to the counsel of God, for the salvation of a sinful world, predicted by the prophets (Isa. 53: 7; Zech. 13: 7). Our Lord's death could not be incidental or accidental. He 'must' suffer (comp. ver. 56; Luke 24: 26; Heb. 2: 10). This declaration also contained consolation for His terrified disciples.

Ver. 55. **Multitudes**, or crowds. Especially the rulers and temple-guards (Luke 22: 52). Mark (14: 48) says 'answers,' i. e., to their actions, not their words. He was probably bound, at this time; but His protest does not imply a desire to resist.—**As against a robber**, not 'a thief' (O. V.), against whom no such display of force would be needed. The same word is used of Barabbas, John 18: 40, and points to a brigand chieftain of a lawless band.—**Daily**. From day to day, as during the past week.—**In the temple**, the most public place in Jerusalem.—**Teaching**. Not unobserved, so that you needed to seek me. Very important as indicating a longer ministry in Jerusalem, not related by the Synoptists, but by John, and a recognized position of Christ as a public teacher.—**And ye took me not**. They dared not (ch. 21: 48); the method now adopted showed the malignity of an evil conscience.

Ver. 56. **But all this is (hath) come to pass**. The words of our Lord. Mark gives a briefer form of the same thought; Luke, another expression, supplementing this: 'but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.' The word of our Lord is therefore His final surrender of Himself to death; a willing offering of Himself for others, in accordance with the purpose of a merciful God.—**The scriptures**. 'The reference is rather to the general tenor of the Scripture than to any single passage' (Mansel, in *Speaker's Com.*). The last words of Christ for most of the disciples till after the resurrection.—**Then all the disciples left him**. All who had joined with Peter in his protestation (ver. 35). He submits, their courage fails them. Only after Christ died for men, could men die for Him.—**And fled**. Not absolutely. See Mark 14: 51; Luke 22: 54; John 18: 15. When the eleven forsook the Lord, other disciples, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathæa, took a more decided stand for Him. The Church can never fail; new Christians take the place of the old ones. The cow-

CHAPTER 26 : 57-68.

Jesus before Caiaphas.

57 And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes

ardly flight of the disciples is sad and humiliating; yet we should remember their weariness and exhaustion after a day and a night of extraordinary excitement; and admire the truthfulness with which the Evangelists mention this weakness. Mark adds the flight of a certain young man, 'probably himself, who left his linen cloth behind.

Jesus before Caiaphas, vers. 57-68.

THE THREE TRIALS. Comp. Mark 14 : 53, 54; 15 : 55; Luke 22 : 54, 63-71; John 18 : 13-18. These seem to have been three judicial examinations of our Lord before the ecclesiastical tribunals.

(1.) An examination before Annas, who, although deposed, was considered the legal high priest by the Jews, while they were obliged to recognize Caiaphas as actual high priest. This is mentioned by John only (John 18 : 13), who followed and went into the palace. It was not formal, no witnesses having been called, but rather an attempt to ensnare our Lord in His own words.

(2.) The night examination before Caiaphas mentioned in this section. This was formal, in accordance with his official character. Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, probably lived in the same palace with him. This would obviate the difficulties arising from the views of the Jews and the authority of the Romans. The guard seems to have remained in the same palace court during both examinations.

(3.) In the morning of Friday the final and formal examination before the Sanhedrin (chap. 27 : 1, 2; Mark 15 : 1; Luke 22 : 66). Matthew and Mark give the details of the second examination, Luke of the third, John of the first. Peter's denials occurred during the period from the first to the close of the second examination. John's account shows this. The other Evangelists treat that subject as a whole, hence Matthew and Mark put it after, and Luke before the examination.

A threefold examination by the secular authorities of Pilate and Herod, succeeded on Friday morning. These repeated trials were probably caused by a consciousness of the groundlessness of the whole proceeding.

Ver. 57. Caiaphas the high priest. Appointed by the Romans, Annas having been deposed, as frequently occurred (comp. ver. 8).—where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. Mark inserts 'the chief-priests,' indicating a meeting of the Sanhedrin or council (ver. 59). The examination before Annas would allow time for them to come together. But it was not the final assemblage of that body (see chap. 27 : 1, 2; Luke 22 : 66-71).

Ver. 58. Peter followed him afar off. With intense and painful curiosity, yet like a mere spectator. Such following leads to danger, not to victory.—Unto the court of the high priest. Not the 'palace' (O. V.; comp. ver. 3), but the open quadrangular area en-

58 and the elders were gathered together. But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers, to see the end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to 60 death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the ¹temple of God, and

¹Or, *sanctuary*: as in ch. 23: 35; 27: 5.

closed by the building. The entrance to this was through the 'porch' (ver. 71; Mark 14: 68). A fire was soon kindled in the court.—**Entered in.** John (18: 15, 16) tells that he himself, as an acquaintance of the high priest, went in, while Peter stood without; the former procured admission for the latter. The first denial occurred about this time (see next section).—**And sat with the officers.** Those who had been engaged in the capture (see ver. 47). He remained there for some time, from about midnight to cock crowing (three o'clock).—**To see the end.** The fire was kindled in the courtyard of the house where Annas lived (according to John), and Mark and Luke, who tell of the examination before Caiaphas, refer to Peter's warming himself there. Annas and Caiaphas therefore probably lived in the same house.

Ver. 59. **The whole council.** The Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were probably absent (Luke 23: 51), since their opposition would have been in vain (comp. John 7: 50; 9: 22). It was not the first time this body had consulted against Him. See John 7: 45-53; 9: 22; 11: 57; 12: 10.—**Sought false witness.** The law of Moses required at least two witnesses (Deut. 17: 6; 19: 15; Num. 35: 30). Knowing that true witness could not be had, they actually sought (repeatedly, as the Gr. imperfect implies, ἐζητοῦν) 'false witness.' Such a sin is greatest in judges.

Ver. 60. **And they found it not, i. e., to answer their purpose.**—**Many false witnesses came,** as was natural; but two witnesses to one specific point were required.—**Afterward;** after numerous vain attempts to find two, even apparently concordant, witnesses.—**Two.** the smallest number requisite.

Ver. 61. **This man.** 'Fellow' (O. V.) conveys a sneer, not contained in the original.—**Said,** etc. A distortion of what the Lord actually did say at the first cleansing of the Temple, according to John 2: 19.—**I am able to destroy the temple,** etc. The testimony as recorded by Mark (14: 58) differs in form, but the same Evangelist says (ver. 59) their witness did not agree. Differing in minor circumstances, they probably agreed in making the saying one derogatory to the temple. Such were regarded as blasphemous by the Jews (Acts 6:

62 to build it in three days. And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what 63 is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou

13); the temple being the symbol of their religion. The witnesses were probably guilty of wilful misinterpretation. The Sanhedrin knew what the true sense of the words was (chap. 27: 63), and the witnesses were probably fully aware of it. Our Lord's zeal in cleansing the temple (chap. 21: 12, 13) should have been an evidence to all that He would not speak slightly of it. The words of our Lord are a prophecy of His death, and yet of His ultimate victory; this, in their blindness and fanaticism they could make a ground for condemnation.

Ver. 62. **And the high priest stood up.** With a show of holy horror.—**Answerest thou nothing?** Silence would be a contempt of important testimony.—**What is it which these witness against thee?** Is it true or false? if true, what is its meaning? To make but one question of the high-priest's language does not suit the vehemence natural to the occasion.

Ver. 63. **But Jesus held his peace.** Comp. Isa. 53: 7: 'he opened not his mouth;' 1 Pet. 2: 23. Before Annas He had spoken (John 18: 19-23), but that was not an official hearing. Here under false witness and reproach He (as before Herod) is silent, in patience and confidence of victory. The testimony was false in fact, even if partially true in form. An answer would have involved an explanation, which His opposers either knew already or were too hostile to accept. His claim to be the Messiah was the ground of their hostility and also the only ground on which they could demand His death. His silence implied this, and served to bring the whole matter to an issue.—**And the high-priest said.** Our Lord's silence compels the abandonment of the subterfuge. Yet the deceitfulness remained. They merely offered the alternative of a conviction as a blasphemer or an imposter.—**I adjure thee, etc.,** Gen. 24: 3; 2 Chron. 36: 13. When a judge used this solemn formula, the simple answer yea or nay, made it the regular oath of the witness.—**By the living God.** In His presence, a witness and judge of the answer.—**The Christ, the Son of God.** The latter term probably meant more than the former, and does not imply that the high-priest believed the Messiah to be the Son of God. Mark 14: 61, and the question at the third examination (Luke 22: 67, 70), indicates that Caiaphas used it in a sense similar to that we now attach to it. 'He and the Sanhedrin wittingly attached to it the peculiar meaning which, on previous occasions, had been such an offence to them (John 5: 18; 10: 33); and Jesus, fully understanding their object, gave a most emphatic affirmation to their inquiry. Of all the testimonies in favor of the divinity of

64 be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Christ, this is the most clear and definite' (Gerlach). 'We must not suppose that Caiaphas himself is describing the promised Messiah as the Son of God: the Jews never attributed a divine birth to the Messiah, nor, except in the Book of Enoch, of doubtful date, was the title *Son of God* ever given to him, so far as we know, even in a figurative sense' (Nicholson). Justin Martin and Origen state that the Jews expected this Messiah to be of merely human birth.

Ver. 64. **Jesus saith.** Put upon judicial oath, our Lord replies. To be silent would be construed as a confession that He was not the Messiah.—**Thou hast said.** An affirmative answer (Mark 14: 62: 'I am'). This calm response, drawn out by the oath, is a public declaration of His Messiahship and Divine Sonship. It ensured His death, but laid full responsibility upon them. The Faithful Witness (Rev. 1: 5) did not falter or fail.—**Nevertheless.** Over and above the confession, which they would not believe, His glory would appear to them as a sign of its truth. He was conscious of His glory in the moment of His condemnation, in His deepest humiliation. This declaration would be a warning to any not hardened in their opposition, but to most, if not all, it was a prophecy of judgment.—**Henceforth ye shall see.** Not simply at some time 'hereafter,' but in all the future. Christ's glorification began as soon as their proceedings against Him were finished, and in such a way as to make the Jewish people see His power. The prophecy has been fulfilled ever since.—**Sitting** as they now sat to judge Him, with a reference to the quiet confidence of His future position in glory.—**At the right hand, i. e.,** the place of honor.—**Of power, i. e.,** of God, who is Almighty. This expression is used in contrast with His present weakness. The whole alludes to Ps. 110: 1, which He had quoted to them in the last encounter (chap. 22: 44).—**And coming on the clouds of heaven.** 'The sign from heaven' they had demanded (Mark 8: 11). This refers to Christ's final appearing, but may include His coming to judgment on the Jewish people, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Schleiermacher pronounces this affirmative answer of our Lord, in view of the situation, 'the greatest word ever spoken by any man, the most glorious apotheosis, and the most certain assurance by which any divinity could proclaim itself' (*Reden über die Rel.*, p. 292.) Similarly Plumptre (in *Ellicott's Com.*): 'No words in the whole Gospel records are more decisive against the views of those who would fain see in our Lord only a great moral teacher, like Socrates or Cakya Mouni. At the very crisis of His history, when denial would have saved His life, He asserts His claim to be much more than this, to be all that the most devout Christians have ever believed Him to be.'

65 Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy : what further need have we of witnesses ? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy :
 66 what think ye ? They answered and said, He is
 67 ¹ worthy of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him : and some smote him ² with the palms of

¹ Gr. *liable to*.

² Or, *with rods*.

Ver. 65. **Then the high-priest rent his garments.** Not the high-priestly robe, which was worn only in the temple. Rending the garments was a sign of mourning or of indignation (Acts 14: 14), but in the former sense was forbidden to the high-priest (Lev. 10: 6; 21: 10). Instances of the high-priests using this sign of indignation occur in the first book of the Maccabees and Josephus. The Jews found in 2 Kings 18: 37 a precedent for rending the clothes on occasions of real or supposed blasphemy. Such an action, at first natural, became a matter of special regulation, hence more theatrical than real.—**He hath spoken blasphemy.** This implies: (1.) That our Lord had on oath claimed to be Divine, else it could not be called blasphemy; (2.) that the high-priest, while compelling Him to be a witness in His own case at once declared His testimony to be *false*, else it could not be called blasphemy. Every one who hears of Jesus now must accept either His testimony respecting Himself, or the verdict of the high-priest.—**What further need, etc.** They had difficulty in getting witnesses. The true witness answered; they refused to believe, but found His confession sufficient for their purpose.—**Behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy.** The high-priest assumes that they all agree with him, the whole verdict being spoken in hot haste. The same charge was made against Christ on former occasions for claiming divine attributes, Mark 2: 7; John 5: 18; 8: 59; 10: 83.

Ver. 66. **What think ye ?** A formal putting of the question to vote.—**He is worthy of (liable to) death.** According to the law, Lev. 24: 16. The answer of all (Mark 14: 64). The Sanhedrin was forbidden to investigate any capital crime during the night, and according to the Roman law a sentence pronounced before dawn was not valid. This test vote, however, they considered as settling the question of guilt; hence the ill-treatment which followed (vers. 67, 68). They were scrupulous in holding another meeting in daylight and there passing the final sentence (chap. 27: 1; Luke 22: 7). Yet even this was illegal, for a sentence of death could not be pronounced and executed on the day of the trial. All the examinations took place within one Jewish day, beginning in the evening. (The word 'guilty,' is followed in modern English by the crime which a man has committed, not by the punishment he deserved.)

Ver. 67. **Then did they spit in his face.** The guard chiefly (Mark 14: 65; Luke 22: 63), but perhaps members of the Sanhedrin

68 their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?

CHAPTER 26 : 69-75.

Peter's Denial.

69 Now Peter was sitting about in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with

also (Acts 7: 54, 57; 22: 2). At all events they permitted it. It was an expression of the greatest contempt. Our Lord was treated as one excommunicated, though the final sentence had not been passed.—**And buffet him.** Struck Him with their fists.—**And some** ('the officers,' Mark 14: 65) **smote him.** Either with the hand, or 'with rods,' probably both. Comp. the similar treatment at the examination before Annas (John 18: 22). This probably took place in part when Jesus was led into the court to be kept there until the morning.

Ver. 68. **Prophecy unto us, thou Christ.** His face was covered or blindfolded, as Mark explains (14: 65), and after each blow, He was asked who gave it. The lower officials probably continued this scoffing amusement for some time. The Roman soldiers were apt in the same kind of mockery (chap. 27: 28-31). First condemned as a blasphemer, He was treated as an outlaw. Luke (22: 65) adds: 'Many other things blasphemously spake they against Him.'

Peter's Denial, vers. 69-75.

THE VARIOUS ACCOUNTS OF Peter's denial. Parallel passages: Mark 14: 66-72; Luke 22: 55-62; John 18: 25-27. Few events in the Bible are so full of human nature and divine grace, of warning and comfort as the fall and restoration of Peter. The nearest parallel case in the O. T. is the great sin and repentance of David (Ps. 51). All four Evangelists narrate the main facts. Their candid statements respecting what might seem derogatory to the good name of the chief Apostle is a guarantee of honesty and presumptive evidence of truthfulness. (Mark, who probably wrote under Peter's own direction, is very full.) To objectors it may be said: 'Thy speech bewrayeth thee.' Every point of the narrative accords not only with Christian experience, but with the character of Peter, and with our Lord's predictions and warnings to him. What befell Peter may befall any Christian who relies on his own strength, especially after self-exaltation (vers. 33-35), lack of watchfulness and prayer (vers. 40, 43), and presumptuous rushing into danger (vers. 51, 58). The account of Peter's repentance also finds its confirmation in the Christian heart. It was occasioned in part by a natural cause (the crowing of a cock), yet even that was a direct sign from the Lord: by a look of compassion and love; by a remembrance of the Lord's words, recalling his past sin of *pride* quite as much as his present denial. All were from Christ, and hence the penitence was genuine and lasting. The four accounts agree that Peter was recognized on three occasions during the night; that he was on all three a denier of his Lord; but they mention different recognizers, especially in the second and third case, they record different replies and different circumstances. It follows that not one of the four consulted the narrative of the others, or derived his account from the same immediate source.

70 Jesus the Galilæan. But he denied before them all,
71 saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he
was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him,
and saith unto them that were there, This man also

It is difficult, however, to construct a single narrative out of the four accounts. Each denial could not have consisted of a recognition by a single person and a single answer by Peter. Peter was in an excited crowd at night, for probably two hours or more. Three single questions and three single answers would not have been all that occurred, but rather three episodes of suspicion and denial. The variations therefore go to prove not only the *independence*, but also the *truthfulness* of the narratives. Agreement in every point would suggest collusion. The theory of evidence that is most satisfactory accepts three occasions of denial, without counting each answer as a separate denial; the more numerous recognitions may have been nearly simultaneous, and the answer, belonging to each occasion, given in well-nigh immediate succession.

FIRST DENIAL; vers. 69-70.

Ver. 69. **Now Peter was sitting without in the court, the interior court enclosed by the house.** John tells (18: 15, 16) how he gained admission. Warming one's self with Christ's enemies is dangerous.—**A maid.** An obscure servant girl the innocent occasion of the fall of the chief of the Apostles! Mark: 'one of the maids of the high-priest,' probably the one who kept the door, mentioned by John, since he connects with this denial Peter's standing by the fire in the court, expressly mentioned by Mark and Luke. But two maid-servants may have made a similar charge on this occasion.—**Jesus the Galilæan.** Probably contemptuous banter, or light ridicule, not with a view to serious accusation. The maid seems to have followed him into the court, repeating the banter, which he repelled in the different words recorded by the different Evangelists.

Ver. 70. **But he denied before them all.** Before those gathered about the fire.—**I know not what thou sayest.** On this first occasion he denies, not only his discipleship and knowledge of Jesus (Luke and John), but even that he understood what she could mean (Matthew and Mark); possibly to two different maids. He practised evasion, which leads to direct lying, often to perjury. Christ's cause is not helped, nor His people defended, by crafty policy. Peter drew his sword in the presence of an armed band, but lied to a bantering maid-servant.

SECOND DENIAL; vers. 71, 72.

Ver. 71. **Into the porch.** In his embarrassing position, he left the fire, going out to the arched gateway leading from the court to the street; probably no further. Mark mentions a crowing of the cock, while he was there (comp. Mark 14: 80). As Peter himself probably informed Mark of this, it was not the cock-crow that brought him to repentance; nor does he conceal his forgetfulness of the signal.—**Another maid saw him, and saith unto them that were**

72 was with Jesus the Nazarene. And again he denied
 73 with an oath, I know not the man. And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter,
 Of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech
 74 bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man. And straightway the

there. This second recognition seems to have been a general one, beginning by the fire (John, who probably stood there, and tells what he himself witnessed), recurring in the porch, where this maid attacked him (Matthew, Mark). If the maid mentioned in ver. 69 was not the portress, then it is possible that she takes up her banter again. Luke tells of a man recognizing him; probably a servant standing in the porch, one of those to whom the maid spoke. At such a time such a charge would awaken further remark.—**Jesus the Nazarene.** Again, a woman's weapon of contempt and ridicule; potent enough when human weakness is not supported by Divine grace.

Ver. 72. Denied with an oath. The oath is mentioned by Matthew alone, and was uttered to the maid in the porch. The downward step of sin is very rapid.—**I know not the man.** From evasion to perjury, one sin leading to another. The expression is even somewhat contemptuous; Peter was now 'a stone of stumbling,' not a 'rock.' What a contrast to his confession, ch. 16: 16.

THIRD DENIAL, followed by repentance; vers. 73-75.

Ver. 73. And after a little while. 'An hour' (Luke), so that the second cock-crowing followed immediately (ver. 74). Peter probably remained in the porch, as a less conspicuous place.—**They that stood by.** A very general recognition by those in the porch. The second denial had allayed the indignation; but the examination was about concluded, and there was more stir and excitement. The first man who recognized him was probably the one mentioned by Luke; then the bystanders joined in: **Surely thou also art one of them,** as if to offset his oath (ver. 72); **for even thy speech bewrayeth** (old English—reveals, convicts) **thee.** The Galilæan dialect was peculiar, not making a distinction between the guttural sounds, and pronouncing the *sh* like *th*; a ready means of detection. Peter may have said *ith* for *ish* (man).

Ver. 74. Then began he to curse, or 'to call down curses on himself,' if what he said was not true. He now lost all self-control.—**And to swear,** to call God to witness that it was true. Probably at this time he was recognized by the kinsman of Malchus (John 18: 26), who had been in the garden of Gethsemane, and doubtless in the audience-room, until our Lord was brought out after the examination, or he would have seen Peter before.—**And straightway the (Gr. a) cock crew.** The second cock-crowing, about three o'clock in the morning. Just then, according to Luke (22: 61), our Lord 'turned

75 cock crew. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER 27: 1-10.

Jesus led to Pilate. The Remorse of Judas.

27: 1 Now when morning was come, all the chief

and looked on Peter' with a glance of sadness and pity, that went like lightning to the quick of his conscience. We infer that this occurred as He was led out after the examination. Peter was in the porch, not the court. This view accounts for the fact of so many having recognized Peter there, and agrees with the requirements of time.

Ver. 75. **And Peter remembered.** His memory was helped by our Lord's look of reproachful love (comp. Mark 14: 72).—**The word** (ver. 34).—**And he went out**, i. e., from the porch into the street. His departure was not to save himself from his perilous position, but to be alone in his grief. He did not go out into the midnight of despair, for it was moon-light still.—**And wept bitterly.** Tears of true penitence. The remorse of Judas led him back to the priests, with money in his hand; the repentance of Peter led him to God with tears in his eyes. 'A small matter (a mean servant) makes us fall when God does not support us; a small matter (the crowing of a cock) raises us again, when His grace makes use of it' (Quesnel). We hear no more of Peter till the morning of the resurrection. He no doubt often referred to his denial, as Paul to his persecution, to his shame and to the praise of Christ's mercy; hence it appears in all the Gospels, most fully in Mark's. The remembrance of his great sin kept him humble all his life, and deepened his gratitude. The same was the case with Paul's persecution. So God overrules even our sins for our good and the good of the Church.

Jesus led to Pilate. The Remorse of Judas, vers. 1-10.

CONTENTS. Comp Mark 15: 1; Luke 22: 66-71. This morning meeting of the Sanhedrin is mentioned more particularly by Luke. They must apply to the Roman governor to have their formal sentence against Jesus executed, since the power of life and death had been taken away from the Sanhedrin. They first decide how to proceed (ver. 1), and then the actual delivery took place (ver. 2). The account of the remorse and suicide of Judas is peculiar to Matthew, but referred to in Peter's speech after the Ascension (Acts 1: 16-19). Its insertion in connection with the prophecy quoted accords with the character of this Gospel. The repentance of Peter and the remorse of Judas stand close together, in the narrative before us, as if to contrast them. They actually occurred in quick succession, although Matthew, to close the subject, adds events that must have happened later (see ver. 7).

Ver. 1. **Now when morning was come.** About sunrise.

priests and the elders of the people took counsel **2** against Jesus to put him to death: and they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate the governor.

Luke: 'as soon as it was day;' comp. John 18: 28. The twilight is short in that latitude. The earliest hour for a *legal* meeting of the Sanhedrin was at sunrise.—**All the chief priests** (the heads of the twenty-four courses) **and the elders of the people took counsel.** The detailed statement of Mark (comp. Luke 22: 66) shows that this was a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, evidently a second one, to confirm the previous decision and to determine on the next step. The mocking spoken of in ch. 26: 67, 68, must have intervened. Luke 22: 66 indicates that this meeting was held in the council-chamber (called Gazith) within the temple-area, where alone, according to the Talmud, sentence of death could be pronounced; also that a formal procession conducted Him thither. It is characteristic of Pharisaism to be most formal when most unjust.—**To put him to death.** They decided how they should cause Him to be put to death in accordance with the decision of the midnight session. Their plan appears to have been: 1. To ask Pilate's consent, without inquiry, to their sentence of death (John 18: 30). 2. If necessary, to make the vague charge, that Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews (ver. 11). This was the ground on which they forced Pilate to consent. 3. Another charge mentioned by John (19: 7), that He claimed to be the Son of God, may have been determined on, in case He denied the political character of His Messiahship. But it had no effect, and the other accusation was resumed.

Ver. 2. **And they bound him.** The bonds put on Him in the garden seem to have been removed some time during the night; or, as others explain, He was first bound as a prisoner (John 18: 12, 24), now more formally as a sentenced criminal.—**And led him away.** Probably in a solemn procession, with a view of influencing both the people and the governor.—**Delivered him up.** The same word often translated 'betrayed.'—**To Pontius Pilate the governor.** The ecclesiastical power sought to use the civil power and to shift the responsibility: the usual course in religious persecutions. The office held by Pilate was that of Roman 'procurator,' whose chief business it was to collect the revenues, and in certain cases to administer justice. Palestine had been thus governed since the banishment of Archelaus (A. D. 6), and Pilate was the sixth procurator, holding the office for ten years under the Emperor Tiberius (probably from A. D. 26–36). The usual residence of the procurator was in Cæsarea Stratonis on the sea-coast (Acts 23: 33; 25: 1, 4, 6, 13); but during the great festivals he was generally at Jerusalem, to preserve order and to uphold the supremacy of the Roman power, perhaps also to administer justice. Pilate (probably from *pilum*, *javelin*) had an unyielding and cruel

3 Then Judas, which betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and
4 elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed ¹innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see

¹ Many ancient authorities read *righteous*.

disposition (comp. Luke 13: 1), and his conduct on three signal occasions led to revolts among the Jews, which he suppressed by bloody measures. He was therefore hated, and at last removed in consequence of the accusations made against his administration by the Jews. He probably died by his own hand. There are many legends about him, invented by both the early Christians and their opponents. He occupies, as the representative of the Roman government, a solitary prominence in the Apostles' Creed. His conduct at the trial of Jesus excites mingled feelings of pity and contempt. He had momentary impulses of justice, was convinced of the innocence of Jesus and anxious to release Him, but still more anxious to keep his place, and sacrificed justice to his selfish interest.

Ver. 3. **Then Judas.** Probably on Friday morning.—**When he saw.** This he could see from the procession to Pilate's judgment-hall.—**That he was condemned.** That Judas did not expect this issue, seems contrary to the words of his confession (ver. 4). This circumstance shows that his object was not to induce Jesus to display His glory; in that case his repentance would have led him to Christ, and not to suicide.—**Repented himself,** felt sorrow or remorse, a mere change of feeling; not the word usually translated 'repent,' which involves a change of heart. Remorse is *caused* by the consequences of sin; repentance is only *occasioned* by them; in remorse the sorrow is for the *consequences*, in repentance for the *cause*, and the sin itself. A terrible prophecy respecting the fate of the betrayer (ch. 26: 24) had been joined with the prediction of this effect of the treachery.—**Brought back the thirty pieces of silver.** He probably received them during the night. Peter first repented in solitude before God; Judas attempted some rectification before men. The bringing back of the money really supports the view that his one great motive was avarice. The coin once so eagerly seized was now burning as molten metal from the furnace.

Ver. 4. **I have sinned,** shorter and better: 'I sinned in betraying.' 'Erred' is too weak. Although Judas had no real conception of the sinfulness of sin, his feeling was intense. All notions that he tried to make his guilt appear small seem to come from wrong views of his motives and of his remorse. Fearful sorrow for the consequences of sin may coexist with entire sinfulness.—**In that I betrayed,** lit., 'in betraying,' **innocent blood.** No sign of affection for his Master, but even Judas may testify to the sinless perfection of our Lord. He

5 thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and 6 hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the 7 ¹treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field,

¹ Gr. *corbanas*, that is, *sacred treasury*. Compare Mark 7: 11.

anticipated the verdict of history.—**What is that to us? see thou to it.** Tools of crime are lightly thrown away after the crime. The rulers have no remorse; they thought of doing God service by putting a blasphemer to death.

Ver. 5. **Cast down, with violence.—Into the sanctuary, i. e., 'the holy place.'** Either he stood just outside in the priests' court and spoke to the priests, who were in the holy place, or in his despair had even entered this forbidden place. In God's temple lay the money for which God's Son had been sold to death, as a testimony against the Jews.—**And departed.** Terror drove him away, as if from danger.—**Hanged himself.** Peter, a few weeks afterwards (Acts 1: 18, 19), speaks of his death as well known. That passage shows that the suicide took place in the field spoken of in vers. 7, 8; supposed to have been on the southern hill, in the valley of Hinnom. It would seem that Judas hanged himself over the precipice, fell headlong in consequence of the rope or branch breaking, struck on one of the sharp projecting rocks so common there, and lay 'burst asunder' in the field below, which he may be said to have 'obtained' (Acts 1: 18), because it was bought with his 'reward of iniquity.' Matthew's account is part of a history, Luke's account part of a speech to those who were acquainted with the facts. The former naturally brings into prominence the conduct of the priests, the latter looks at the death of Judas in the light of the Apostleship he had lost.

Ver. 6. **It is not lawful, etc.** Based upon Deut. 23: 18. What was put in the treasury was deemed an offering to God.—**Since it is the price of blood.** They thus stigmatized the crime of their tool, but not their own. Too conscientious to defile the treasury, they were not afraid to defile their own hands. A characteristically Pharisaical scruple.

Ver. 7. **And they took counsel.** Probably soon after the crucifixion.—**The potter's field.** Some well known spot, outside of the city wall, of little value, because unfit for tillage.—**To bury strangers in.** Not heathen, but either foreign Jews, or proselytes of the gate. 'The field of blood' would be deemed good enough for this class, who could not be wholly overlooked. The charity was at all events a cheap one, and Pharisaism is true to itself in this. Compare the traders in the court of the Gentiles (chap. 21: 12).

8 to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called,
 9 The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled
 that which was spoken ¹by Jeremiah the prophet, say-
 ing, And ²they took the thirty pieces of silver, the
 price of him that was priced, ³whom certain of the

¹ Or, through² Or, I took.³ Or, whom they priced on the part of the sons of Israel.

Ver. 8. **The field of blood.** In Aramaic 'Akeldama,' Acts 1 : 19. The stain of the blood money remained in the name. It belonged to the Latins until the fourteenth century and afterwards became the property of the Armenians. Until the present century it was used as a burial place.—**Unto this day**, i. e., when Matthew wrote, many (about 30) years after the event. Comp. 25 : 15.

Ver. 9. **Then was fulfilled.** The action of the Sanhedrin undesignedly fulfilled prophecy.—**Jeremiah the prophet.** No such words can be found in the book of Jeremiah, but something very similar occurs in Zech. 11 : 13. Explanations : (1) Zechariah was changed into Jeremiah. Of this there is no proof of any weight, and there is no motive for the change. (2) The book of Jeremiah, being actually arranged by the Jews as the first of all the prophets, gave its name to the whole body of their writings. This is the simplest view. (3) The discrepancy was purposed ; to show the unity of prophecy. Altogether unsatisfactory. (4) A mistake of memory. Matthew's other citations from Zechariah have no name prefixed (chap. 21 : 5 ; 26 : 31), but he must have known the name of the prophet. (5) The passage occurred in some work of Jeremiah which has been lost, or was an oral statement, or expunged by the Jews. (6) Lange refers the words 'as the Lord appointed me,' to Jer. 32 : 8. But that passage is very obscure. The view is more ingenious than satisfactory. We regard the whole as a free adaptation from Zech. 11 : 13. Here the prophet's labors are valued at thirty pieces of silver which he is bidden to cast to the potter in the house of the Lord. If we accept the words : 'a goodly price that I was prized at of them,' as spoken to the prophet, the reference to the Messiah is undoubted. The word 'them' is then expanded into the clause of the text : **whom certain of the children of Israel did price**, referring to the contemptuous estimate (the price of a slave) put upon the Messiah by the representatives of the children of Israel, as in the case of the prophet. Others prefer to render it : 'bought from the children of Israel,' finding a reference to the selling of Joseph, taking Judas as the representative of the nation. But the Greek means 'priced ;' Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver ; the priests represented the nation. (See an Exc. of Cook, in *Speaker's Com. on M.*, p. 199.)

Ver. 10. **And they gave them for the potter's field.** In the prophecy we read : 'to the potter,' a phrase of which many fanciful explanations have been given. The thirty pieces were paid to the

10 children of Israel did price; and ¹they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

CHAPTER 27: 11-31.

Christ before Pilate.

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the

¹ Some ancient authorities read *I gave*.

potter for the field, and we have here a simple expansion, showing the full symbolical meaning of the prophecy.—**As the Lord appointed me.** This may readily be referred to the command given to Zechariah, without searching for something similar in Jeremiah.

Christ before Pilate, vers. 11-31.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 15: 2-15; Luke 23: 2-7; John 18: 29-38; 19: 1-16. The account of Matthew is least detailed, but contains two incidents (vers. 19, 24) peculiar to itself. The Jews first attempted to obtain Pilate's consent to the death of Jesus, without formal accusation (John 18: 28-32). Failing in this they make the political charge (Luke 23: 2). Then comes the question of Pilate (ver. 11). Our Lord acknowledges His Messiahship, but first inquires in what sense Pilate puts the question (John 18: 34). Before His Jewish accusers He was silent (vers 12-14). Pilate finds no fault in Him, but hearing He is a Galilean sends Him to Herod (Luke 23: 4-12). On the return from Herod, Pilate offers them the choice between Jesus and Barabbas (vers. 15-18), seeking to release Jesus (Luke 23: 13-17; but the multitude, under the influence of the priests, ask that Barabbas be released and Jesus crucified (vers. 20-23). Luke records three successive efforts of Pilate to release our Lord; Matthew three answers of the people (vers. 21-23). Pilate was no doubt influenced also by the message of his wife (ver. 19). Yet by having put Christ on a level with Barabbas he had already committed himself and gave way to avoid a tumult. After the significant hand washing and the awful response of the multitude (vers. 24, 25), Jesus was scourged (ver. 26). Pilate may have hoped that this would satisfy the Jews; for, after the crown of thorns had been put upon Christ, Pilate exhibited Him to the multitude (John 19: 1-4, '*Ecce homo*'). Between vers. 30 and 31 we place a number of incidents mentioned by John (19: 6-15): the new accusation on the part of the Jews, the subsequent interview of Pilate and Jesus, the threat of the Jews, the final decision of Pilate, his taunts calling forth the cry: 'We have no king but Cæsar.'

Ver. 11. **Now Jesus stood before the governor.** In 'the judgment hall' (John 18: 28), which the Sanhedrin did not enter for the fear of defilement. Failing to get Pilate's consent without inquiry, they charge Jesus with 'saying, that he himself is Christ, a king' (Luke 23: 2).—**Art thou the king of the Jews?** Claiming the throne of David, and therefore an enemy of Cæsar. They had condemned Him for 'blasphemy,' but they bring a political accusation now, since

12 Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at ¹the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they

¹Or, a feast.

Pilate would probably not take notice of the religious one (see John 18: 31).—**Thou sayest**, *i. e.*, 'yes.' An admission that he claimed to be a king, but in a spiritual sense, and therefore no rebel. He first inquired in what sense Pilate puts the question, in the theocratical or in the political sense, and then explained the nature of His kingdom which is 'not of this world.' See John 18: 34-37.

Ver. 12. **Accused.** When they sought to establish their charge.—**He answered nothing**, as before Caiaphas. An answer would not have convinced them, nor furthered Pilate's wish to release Him. Silence is often more eloquent than speech.

Ver. 13. **How many things?** Comp. Luke 23: 5, as a specimen of the testimony, or accusations, they brought. The main charge was true in form, but false in fact: His claim to be a king was not a political offence. So as to the evidence: He had stirred up the people, etc., but not to mutiny or for political purposes.

Ver. 14. **And he gave him no answer, not even to one word.** This is the emphatic force of the original.—**Marvelled greatly.** The silence of our Lord continued until just before the final decision (see John 19: 10, 11). Those accused are not often silent, and Pilate had probably found the Jews tried at his bar especially vehement.

Ver. 15. **Now at the feast**, or 'a feast.' Annually at the Pass-over.—**Was wont.** Expressly mentioned by three Evangelists. When the custom arose is unknown, but it was undoubtedly designed to soften the Roman yoke. A turbulent people always sympathizes with criminals condemned by hated rulers. That they could choose the prisoner was a prominent feature.

Ver. 16. **A notable prisoner.** A leader in an insurrection in which he had committed murder (Mark and Luke). John calls him 'a robber.' Probably one of the Zealots, of whom Josephus speaks. His crime was really political.—**Barabbas**, 'Bar-abbas,' *i. e.*, 'the son of Abbas,' or 'of a father.' Some minor authorities call him here and in ver. 17 '*Jesus Barabbas*.' Meyer and Nicholson defend this reading, and explain the omission of '*Jesus*' from reverence. Origen says: 'In many MSS. it is not contained that Barabbas was also called

17 had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew 19 that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto

Jesus, and perhaps rightly, so that the name Jesus would not belong to any sinner.' It may also be urged that Barabbas was only a surname. Some have seen here a play of divine Providence (*'Ludit in humanis divina potentia rebus.'*) It is difficult to explain the omission. But the best MSS., omit '*Jesus*' here as well as in Mark, Luke and John. Ewald conjectures that Barabbas was the son of a Rabbi or a false Messiah, who stirred up an insurrection against Pilate for misappropriation of the temple-revenue to the building an aqueduct (Jos., *War* II. 9, § 4); hence the eagerness with which the Sanhedrin and the people demanded his release. Practical commentators and sermonizers make Barabbas the representative of the human race, which has justly deserved death, but is released by the substitution of the innocent Christ. 'God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. 5: 21).

Ver. 17. **When therefore they were gathered together.** The Sanhedrin was gathered by Pilate himself, after Jesus had been sent back by Herod (Luke 23: 7). As the morning wore on, there would be a greater crowd of others.—**Jesus who is called Christ?** Pilate seems to have known of the Messianic claim. His policy was crooked. He ought to have released Jesus; but he would avoid opposing the council. He chose this expedient, probably with the idea, that the popularity of Jesus would lead the multitude to call for His release. But he was outwitted, or at least mistaken. To put Jesus, as yet uncondemned, on a level with Barabbas, was a crime, a cowardly shirking of responsibility, and a blunder; for this proposal placed Pilate in the power of the Sanhedrin. Pilate was not 'weak and irresolute,' but baffled in his purpose by superior cunning. Yet his purpose, like his character, was lacking in moral earnestness; the grand defect of the heathen world at that time. Comp. his question of skeptical indifference: 'What is truth?' (John 18: 38), and his mocking tone throughout.

Ver. 18. **For envy, of His popularity.** This implies that Pilate knew something of Jesus before; but it shows his injustice, in not protecting Him as innocent. Still Pilate, while not wishing to directly oppose the rulers, really desired to thwart them.

Ver. 19. **While he was sitting.** Probably while the people were considering the matter.—**The judgment seat.** A lofty seat of authority, usually on a stone pavement; comp. John 19: 18.—

him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man : for I have suffered many things this 20 day in a dream because of him. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they

His wife sent unto him. From the time of Augustus the Roman governors were in the habit of taking their wives with them into their provinces, which formerly was forbidden from fear of female influence in favor of leniency. Tradition gives the name of Pilate's wife as *Claudia Procula* or *Procla*, and the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus says she was a proselyte of the gate; but little weight is to be attached to this. She is canonized by the Greek Church.—**That righteous man.** She may have known something of Jesus, and was satisfied of His innocence. Her request hints that Pilate might incur Divine vengeance by injuring Jesus. She alone pleads the cause of our Saviour. Plato describes the perfectly just man as one who, 'without doing any wrong, may assume the appearance of the grossest injustice;' yea, who 'shall be scourged, tortured, fettered, deprived of his eyes, and after having endured all possible sufferings, fastened to a post, must restore again the beginning and prototype of righteousness.' This remarkable description is an unconscious prophecy of heathenism. (See Schaff, *Person of Christ*, p. 188.)—**Suffered many things,** or 'much.' Some fearful apparition must be meant.—**In a dream.** The dream may have been entirely natural, the reflection of her own thoughts (although the fathers, Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom and Augustin, traced it to a divine revelation, and Ignatius even to Satan as a device to prevent the crucifixion). The governor's wife knew something of the mission of Jesus; and the night before, the Sanhedrin had in all probability alarmed the procurator's household, coming to demand a guard.—Pilate's desire to release Jesus was doubtless increased; but he was already committed to the choice of the people.—The remarkable episode recorded in this verse is peculiar to Matthew. A Roman lady, a heathen, with the womanly instinct of purity and innocence, pleads for Jesus as a righteous man, when His own disciples forsook Him, and the Jewish priests condemned Him as an impostor and blasphemer. The first express testimonies to the innocence and sinlessness of Christ came from the lips of the traitor, and of the wife of His heathen judge who condemned Him to death against his better conviction.

Ver. 20. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes. Probably while Pilate was receiving the message from his wife. The leaders would say: 'Jesus had been condemned by the orthodox court; Barabbas was, on the contrary, a champion of freedom; Pilate wished to overthrow their rights, etc. The fact that Jesus was a Galilean may also have been used against Him. The 'multitudes' did not represent the whole people, certainly not the Galilean festal pilgrims who a few days before had hailed Him with loud Hosannas, but the mob gathered from the streets of Jerusalem,

21 should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. But the governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? And they
 22 said Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ? They
 23 all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceed-
 24 ingly, saying, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate

hired for the occasion, and easily excited to a contagious phrenzy. They were well represented by Barabbas, whom they preferred to Jesus.

Ver. 21. **But the governor answered.** He may have tried to obtain a decision before the arguments of the rulers produced an effect, or simply to end the matter.—**Barabbas.** Pilate's cunning recoiled on himself. From this point he was committed against Jesus. When questions of justice are entrusted to a mob, the innocent usually suffer.

Ver. 22. **What then shall I do unto Jesus?** An effort to escape the consequences of his previous false step by appealing to the people, perhaps also an expression of surprise.—**Let him be crucified.** Pilate did not expect this. Their own law would have punished Jesus by stoning. But Pilate had placed Jesus on a level with Barabbas, and they ask the punishment due to him, the robber and rebel. They put the Innocent One in the place of the guilty. Thus the details of prophecy in regard to the manner of Christ's death were to be fulfilled. Contrast this demand with the 'Hosannas' of the previous Sunday. Popular movements which do not rest on moral convictions are as shifting as the sand. The 'voice of the people,' when misguided, may be the voice of Satan; yet God overrules even this for good. Still we must not confound the rabble which cried: 'Crucify Him,' with the people. See note on ver. 20. We must remember that seven weeks afterward three thousand were converted in Jerusalem in one day.

Ver. 23. **What evil hath he done?** Pilate repeated this question three times, joining with it the proposal to chastise Him and let Him go (Luke 23: 22). The only answer is a more excited demand, leading to an uproar. The persistence of Pilate shows his real desire to release Jesus. But the multitude felt that Pilate, by his previous proposal, was committed to a decision against Jesus. Hence a governor, representing the proud Roman power, the nation of legal enactments, was forced to parley with a mob, which at another time he would have crushed with the severest measures. When Christ is to be crucified, no alliance of godless men is impossible. Comp. Luke 23: 12.

Ver. 24. **When Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing.** The mob triumphed (see Luke 23: 23). It was a dangerous time for

saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent ¹of the blood of this righteous man : see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he unto them

¹ Some ancient authorities read of this blood : see ye, &c.

an insurrection, and Pilate would have been called to account for it, since the Jews were constantly presenting complaints at Rome. He could not have made a defence to his superiors ; so he preferred to sanction wrong, knowing and confessing it to be such.—**Took water, and washed his hands**, etc. A symbolical act, well understood by the Jews (Deut. 21 : 6), to express freedom from guilt. But he condemned himself, even while he washed his hands.—**This righteous man**. Significant language just here, when ‘this righteous man’ is about to suffer the punishment of one (Barabbas) confessedly guilty. He suffered, the just for the unjust.*

Ver. 25. **His blood**, i. e., the guilt of the punishment, if He be innocent, **be upon us**. Pilate formally puts the responsibility upon them ; but in a fanatical hate they assume it themselves, even adding : **and on our children**. Peculiar to Matthew, who wrote mainly for Jewish Christians. The imprecation has been a fearful legacy from that generation. But the curse will be turned to a blessing, and the blood of Christ be on that people in its cleansing, healing power (Rom. 11 : 25, 26).

Ver. 26. **But Jesus he scourged**. The guilty one was released, and the innocent one entered upon his punishment. Scourging usually

* This vain attempt of Pilate to wash away his guilt suggests some reminiscences from poets. One mentioned by Plumptre from Ovid (*Fast.* II. 45):

‘Too easy souls who dream the crystal flood
Can wash away the fearful guilt of blood.’

Another and more striking from Shakespeare (*Macbeth* II. 2), who makes Macbeth say before the murder of Duncan :

‘Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,
Making the green one red.’

And Lady Macbeth, after the king’s murder, which she had instigated, rubbing her blood-stained hand, says :

‘Here’s the smell of blood still :
All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.
Oh! oh! oh!’

Barabbas : but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the ¹palace*, and gathered unto him the whole ²band.
28 And they ³stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

¹ Gr. *Prætorium*. See Mark 15: 16. * For "palace" read "Prætorium" with marg. Or, *palace* [as in Mark 15: 16]. So in John 18: 28, 33; 19: 9. — Am. Com.
² Or, *cohort* ³ Some ancient authorities read *clothed*.

preceded crucifixion, or was applied to extort confession. Pilate probably ordered the usual scourging, hoping still to release Jesus (John 19: 4, 15). He then showed Him (*Ecce Homo*) to the people, but in vain, as he might have known, for he had already twice proposed this punishment (Luke 23: 16, 22). Roman scourging was a fearful punishment. The entire body was bared, the lashes were given without number, thus differing from the Jewish mode, which was confined to forty stripes (Deut. 25: 3; 2 Cor. 11: 24). It could not be inflicted upon a Roman citizen (Acts 18: 37; 22: 25), but was for slaves. The prisoner was usually bound to a low pillar or stake in a stooping posture, so that the skin of the back was stretched tightly; as their backs were flayed by the process, they frequently fainted, and sometimes died.—**And delivered up to be crucified.** The delivery was to the Roman soldiers who executed the sentence. Thus Pilate sacrificed his independent position as a representative of the Roman law to the fanaticism of the Jewish hierarchy. The State became a tool in the hands of an apostate and blood-thirsty Church. Pilate's conduct is an awful warning to rulers who to gain popularity pander to religious fanaticism. His political fall was due to the accusation of these very people.

Ver. 27. **Into the palace**, or, 'prætorium,' the official residence of the governor. The scourging had taken place outside, in the court (Mark 15: 16). The word *prætorium* was applied first to the general's tent in the Roman camp, then to the residence of the provincial governors, who were usually generals. Pilate, when in Jerusalem, probably lived (as Gessius Florus did, according to Josephus, *War* II. 14 § 8) in the former palace of Herod, on the northern brow of Zion, near the Jaffa gate. Others think that Herod Antipas occupied this palace, and Pilate the castle Antonia at the north-west of the temple court, where the garrison was quartered and where the 'Via Dolorosa' of modern Jerusalem begins and leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.—**The whole band.** The tenth part of a legion, the 'cohort,' numbering from four hundred to six hundred men, then on duty at Pilate's residence. It was probably in the open guard-room of the cohort, but this does not prove that the place was the castle Antonia.

Ver. 28. **And they stripped him.** Some ancient authorities read 'clothed him.' His clothing was replaced after the scourging, and probably also the robe which Herod had put on Him to mock Him

29 And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying,
 30 Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him,
 31 and took the reed and smote him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

(Luke 23 : 11), usually supposed to have been white, marking Him as a *candidate* for royal honors. This robe was removed, and instead they put on him a scarlet robe, the sign of His having attained royal honors. It was probably an ordinary military cloak, perhaps a cast-off cloak of Pilate. Mark and John speak of it as 'purple;' but imperial or royal purple is more scarlet than blue.

Ver. 29. **A crown of thorns.** This would wound as well as mock Him, though the latter was the chief design. It represented the laurel wreath of the Cæsars, which Tiberius habitually wore. The thorn was probably the Zizyphus Spina Christi, the *nab* or *nubb* of the Arabs, 'with many small and sharp spines; soft, round, and pliant branches; leaves much resembling ivy, of a very deep green, as if in designed mockery of a victor's wreath.'—**And a reed in his right hand,** as a mock sceptre of royalty.—**They kneeled down.** In feigned homage, greeting Him in the usual form : **Hail, King of the Jews!** A symbolical meaning may be found in all this mock-adoration. 'Even in the midst of the mockery the truth made itself felt.' St. Bernard wrote one of his finest hymns on 'O Sacred Head now wounded, with shame and grief weighed down,' reproduced by Paul Gerhardt in German, and by J. Alexander in English.

Ver. 30. **And they spat upon him.** The sport of wicked men wounds; if they are rough, it becomes brutality. Yet the Jews had done this (chap. 26 : 67); Herod taught these rude soldiers how to mock, and Pilate invited them to do it.—**The reed.** The mock sceptre. There was an alternation of mocking homage and cruel treatment.

Ver. 31. **And when they had mocked him.** After this occurred the presentation to the people (John 19 : 5) and Pilate's last attempt to release Him. But his previous permission of the mockery shows a great lack of moral earnestness. 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' Though Pilate was neither weak nor irresolute, he exhibited that lack of moral principle which then characterized the heathen world. His position, authority, and convictions, render the course he pursued one which entitled his name to the continued pillory of shame accorded to it in the Apostles' Creed.

CHAPTER 27: 32-56.

The Crucifixion.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they¹ compelled to go *with them*,

¹ Gr. *impressed*.

The Crucifixion, vers. 32-56.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 15: 21-41; Luke 22: 26-49; John 19: 17-30. This section describes the central fact of the world's history. The accounts of the four Evangelists agree perfectly as to the main points; but each mentions circumstances omitted by the others. Matthew gives the fullest statement of the blasphemy against Christ's Messianic dignity; and he alone narrates the effect produced upon the realm of the dead by the death of Jesus.

THE CROSS. Of this there were three forms: 1. The ordinary Roman cross (*Cruz immissa* or *capitata*), a transverse beam crossing a perpendicular one at some distance from the top— According to tradition this was the form of the Saviour's cross, which appears probable from the fact that the 'title' was placed over the head. The so-called *Greek cross* is a form of the *cruz immissa*, where the two beams cross each other in the middle, and the four arms are of equal length—. 2. St. Anthony's cross (*Cruz commissa*), a transverse beam placed on the top of a perpendicular one, resembling the letter T. 3. St. Andrew's cross (*Cruz decussata*) like the letter X. The cross which appeared to Constantine was of this form, with the Greek letter R in it, so as to represent the first two letters of the word Christos (χ and ρ). It bore the inscription on the imperial banner: 'By this thou shalt conquer.'

In the middle of the perpendicular beam there was a piece of wood, on which the sufferer rested, to prevent the whole weight of the body from falling upon the hands and tearing them from the nails; but as it protracted the sufferings it might itself become a source of great pain. Our Lord was fastened to His cross by nails, driven through His hands and feet (comp. Luke 24: 39); which seems to have been the usual mode. Each foot was probably nailed separately. The piercing of the feet was formerly contested, but is now generally admitted. He may have still worn the crown of thorns; especially as the removal of the robe is mentioned, and not that of the crown (ver. 31). Crucifixion was a most disgraceful and cruel punishment introduced into Judæa by the Romans and inflicted only on slaves and the worst criminals. Constantine the Great abolished it. The Jews often hanged those who had been stoned to death, but the corpse must be buried the same day, so as not to pollute the land (Deut. 21: 22, 23). The Romans permitted the crucified to die slowly; and the sufferings sometimes continued for three days. Their flesh was given to the birds or other wild animals. As according to Jewish custom, the bodies must at once be taken down and buried, death was hastened by the *crucifragium*, the breaking of the legs, to which was sometimes added 'a mercy-stroke,' that is, the piercing of the body. If they were already dead, the latter alone was given, to make the matter sure. The physical sufferings of the victims were fearfully great. Dr. Richter, a physician, thus describes them: '1. On account of the unnatural and immovable position of the body and the violent ex-

tension of the arms, the least motion produced the most painful sensation all over the body, but especially on the lacerated back and the pierced members. 2. The nails caused constantly increasing pain on the most sensitive parts of the hands and feet. 3. Inflammation set in at the pierced members and wherever the circulation of the blood was obstructed by the violent tension of the body, and increased the agony and an intolerable thirst. 4. The blood rushed to the head and produced the most violent headache. 5. The blood in the lungs accumulated, pressing the heart, swelling all the veins, and caused nameless anguish. Loss of blood through the open wounds would have shortened the pain, but the blood clotted and ceased flowing. Death generally set in slowly, the muscles, veins, and nerves gradually growing stiff, and the vital powers sinking from exhaustion.' (From Lange on *Matt.*, pp. 522 sq.)

By the crucifixion of our Lord the cross of the bitterest sufferings and cruel death has been changed into a tree of life that bears the richest fruits of penitence and gratitude. From the moment He was lifted on the cross, He began to draw all men unto Him (comp. John 12: 32).

'Faithful cross! above all others, one and only noble tree!

None in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit thy peers may be:

Sweetest wood and sweetest iron, sweetest weight is hung on thee!

(Venantius Fortunatus, about 600.)

Ver. 32. Came out. From the city. Executions took place outside of the camp, here outside of the holy city. Num. 15: 35; 1 Kings 21: 13; Acts 7: 56. This may have been the Roman custom also. As Pilate had no lictors, soldiers led our Lord forth: a centurion (ver. 54) as usual headed the company. A herald generally went before the condemned person, but the Evangelists do not mention this.—**A man of Cyrene, Simon by name.** Simon Peter was not there, an unknown Simon took his place. Mark (15: 21): 'coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus,' perhaps the Christians mentioned, the one in Acts 19: 33; the other in Rom. 16: 13; but the names were common. He was probably a Jew who had come to attend the Passover, as many of them lived in the city of Cyrene (in African Libya), and had a synagogue in Jerusalem; comp. Acts 2: 10; 6: 9; 11: 20. Meeting the procession, he probably showed some sympathy for Jesus. As his sons were known in the early Church it is conjectured that he became a Christian and was one of those 'men of Cyrene' who preached to the Greeks at Antioch, Acts 11: 20. (Some Gnostic sects devised the fable that Simon was crucified by mistake for Jesus, and this fable through apocryphal sources was believed by Mohammed, *Koran*, Suras 3, 4.)—**Him they compelled**, or 'impressed for service' (comp. chap. 5: 41). Jesus at first bore His own cross (John 19: 17), as was customary. Tradition says, that our Lord, enfeebled by the scourging and the long agitation, sunk to the ground beneath the load, but the more exact expression of Luke 23: 26 ('that he might bear it *after Jesus*') shows that the after part of the cross alone, which usually dragged upon the ground, was put upon Simon. Those who bear the cross after Jesus carry the lightest end.

33 that he might bear his cross. And when they were

Another incident on the way is mentioned by Luke (23: 27-31); the wailing of the women, the touching address of Jesus to them, His last warning of the coming sorrows, and the leading of the two robbers with Him to Golgotha.

Ver. 33. **Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull.** The name is the Aramaic form for the Hebrew word 'skull.' The more familiar Latin 'Calvary' from the Latin *calvarium*, has the same meaning (see Luke 23: 33, O. V., the Revision renders 'skull'). It is very unlikely that it was the place of execution, and that the name arose from the skulls of the criminals lying there. In that case, the name would have been: 'The place of skulls.' It is now generally believed that the form of the elevation (scarcely a *hill*) resembled a skull. There is a curious tradition, that Adam was buried where the second Adam died and rose again; and hence Adam's skull is often introduced in pictures at the foot of the cross.

THE LOCATION OF GOLGOTHA OR CALVARY. This is still a matter of dispute. From the N. T. we know that Christ was crucified *outside* of the city, yet *near* the city and near a public road, also near a garden and rocky sepulchre (ch. 27: 39, 60; 28: 11; Mark 15: 20, 21, 29; Luke 23: 26; John 19: 17, 20, 38-42; Heb. 13: 12). Even now, as in the days of the Romans, all executions take place outside of the gate, though not in any particular locality. There is a barren and rocky elevation which well answers these conditions, a few minutes' walk outside of the Damascus gate just opposite the so-called 'Grotto of Jeremiah' where the prophet is said to have written his Lamentations. Some scholars have recently pointed to that spot, but it is, of course, a mere conjecture. Since the fourth century the site of the present 'Church of the Holy Sepulchre' which is the joint property of the Greek and Latin churches, has been claimed as the Calvary, including the identical spot of the crucifixion and the sepulchre of our Lord. The chief argument is the unbroken tradition which was never doubted till 1738. But the chief objection is its location *inside* the present city wall. It cannot be proven and is very unlikely that the site of this church was *outside* the second wall (from the gate Gennath to the fortress Antonia) at the time of Christ when the city was much larger and more densely populated. It is also repugnant to sound Christian feeling that a church which has so often been profaned and disgraced by gross superstition, fraud, and bloody quarrels of Christian sects (now checked by Turkish soldiers) should have been the spot on which the Saviour died for the sins of men. A wrong estimate of these holy places has led to the fearful loss of life in the Crusades and more recently in the Crimean War.

It is true no other locality can be *proven* to be the spot. But it is perhaps a wise ordering of Providence that the place of the crucifixion, like the grave of Moses, has been hidden beyond the reach of superstition and idolatry. The Apostles and Evangelists barely allude to the places of Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. Instead of cleaving to earth, they fixed their eyes upon the great facts themselves and worshipped the exalted Saviour in heaven where He lives forever. The crusaders sought Christ among the dead to find out that 'He is not there, He is risen.' (See on this whole subject Schaff, *Through Bible Lands*, pp. 259-270.)

34 come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not 35 drink. And when they had crucified him, they parted 36 his garments among them, casting lots: and they sat 37 and watched him there. And they set up over his

Ver. 34. **Wine**, according to the best authorities; but the sour wine used might be called 'vinegar.' See Luke 23: 36, where the 'vinegar' offered Him by the soldiers must have been their ordinary drinking wine; comp. ver. 49; Ps. 69: 21.—**Mingled with gall.** Mark: 'myrrh.' The term 'gall' was applied to many bitter substances, including 'myrrh.' It was a stupefying draught, such as was commonly given before execution. The custom was, however, a Jewish rather than a Roman one.—**He would not drink.** He afterwards took the unmixed vinegar wine, when He was about to say: 'It is finished' (comp. John 19: 28-30). He tastes this mixture, to show that He was aware of its purpose, and refuses it. He would drink of the cup His Father had given Him, but not of this. The early martyrs felt justified in thus mitigating their pains: but His vicarious sufferings must be borne to the fullest extent. 'He would look death in the face with untroubled spirit' (Keim).

Ver. 35. **And when they had crucified him.** Here occurs His touching prayer for the soldiers (Luke 23: 34). To all the physical torture described in the note on 'the cross,' we must in this case add the result of these upon a soul sensitive and capable of suffering beyond all human comparison: the effect of ingratitude, of loneliness, of taunts from those who represented His own chosen people, and above all His state of soul as He consciously bore the sins of the world. Hence the cross, the instrument of such torture, the sign of such shame, has become the symbol of honor, blessing, and redemption. Even the superstition that bows to it, however to be deprecated, witnesses that *the cross* is the centre of the Christian religion (comp. 1 Cor. 2: 2).—**They parted his garments, casting lots.** Those crucified were probably naked, at least their clothes were given to the executioners. In stoning, the Jews enjoined a linen girdle. John tells why it was necessary to gamble for the coat. There were four soldiers (John 19: 23). The rest of the verse in the O. V.: 'that it might be fulfilled,' etc., is not found here in the oldest manuscripts, but was probably inserted from John 19: 24. The quotation is from Ps. 22: 18.

Ver. 36. **And they sat and watched him there.** 'The gamblers beneath Christ's cross changed into confessors of His glory' (Lange). To prevent the condemned from being taken down. 'In this case they had a peaceful bivouac which assumed a significant meaning.'

Ver. 37. **And they set up over his head.** It was customary

head his accusation written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand, and one on the left. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging

for the condemned person to carry 'a title,' (*titulus*), or board, with his name and crime written in black letters, suspended from his neck, to the place of execution, or it was carried before him. Pilate had written this title, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, (the language of empire, of culture, and of religion), and it was undoubtedly intended mainly to mock the Jews (see John 19: 19-22). An unconscious prophecy of the universal kingdom of Christ who reigns from the cross, and draws all men unto Himself (comp. John 12: 32).—**His accusation**, put in a form which conveyed a sneer against His accusers. Thus He died, with His proper title over His head.—**This is Jesus the king of the Jews**. Each of the four Evangelists gives a different form of this title. It was written in three languages, and possibly in three forms. John was an eye-witness, and if there were but one form, that given in his account must be accepted as correct. See John 19: 19-22. The entire independence of all four Gospels is fully proven by this variation.*

Ver. 38. **Then**. Luke (23: 32) tells us that the two robbers were led out with Him.—**Two robbers**, or brigands (not 'thieves,' as in the O. V.). Probably associates of Barabbas (who is also called a 'robber,' John 18: 40), and hence placed on either side of Jesus, who had taken the punishment due to Barabbas. This proceeding carries out the mockery implied in the title; these two representing the subjects of 'the King of the Jews.' The usual punishment for robbery was crucifixion. Large numbers of brigands, mostly religious fanatics, were crucified during the Jewish war.

Ver. 39. **They that passed by**. People on the way to the temple-service, or coming to see the crucifixion. The morbid taste for horrors no doubt existed then, and popular hatred was aroused. Besides, the dignitaries were there (ver. 41)! The elevation seems to have formed a natural stage for the public exposure of the crucified.—**Railed on him**, literally, 'blasphemed.' They reviled; but it was in this case blasphemy.—**Wagging their heads** (comp. Ps. 22: 7), in malignant triumph mingled with contempt.

* Farrar (on Luke 23: 38) supposes that

John gave the Hebrew form: '*Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews*.'

Mark the Greek: '*The King of the Jews*.'

Luke the Latin: '*This is the King of the Jews*.'

Matthew combined the three, omitting 'of Nazareth.'

ישו הנצרי מלך היהודים—John.

Ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων—Mark.

Rex Judæorum hic est.—Luke.

- 40 their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the
 1 temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if
 thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.
 41 In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*,
 42 with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others;
 1 himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel;
 let him now come down from the cross, and we will
 43 believe on him. He trusted on God; let him deliver
 him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

Or, *can he not save himself?*

Ver. 40. **Thou that destroyest the temple**, etc. The testimony before the Sanhedrin (ch. 26: 61) was taken up by the citizens of Jerusalem, who were proud of their temple.—**Save thyself**. Power to destroy the temple implies power to do this.—**If thou art the Son of God**. Another reference to the proceedings before the Sanhedrin (ch. 26: 64). The taunt is in a poetic form (Hebrew parallelism); and the crowds at an execution in the East are said to give vent to their feelings in this way still. Mark gives the same taunt in different words, and it was no doubt uttered in many different ways. Luke says (23: 35): 'The people stood beholding.' It appears therefore that the derision of the people was by no means so malignant as that of the rulers.

Ver. 41. **In like manner also the chief priests**, etc. All classes of the Sanhedrin were represented, probably in large numbers, and their taunt is of a public, national character. Thus the chief ecclesiastical personages acted on the great festival-day of their religion. The language is differently reported by the several Evangelists. The mockery was probably continued for some time, and would vary in form.

Ver. 42. **He saved others**. This may be ironical, or it is a recognition of His miracles of mercy, to taunt Him with a supposed loss of power just when He needed it most for Himself. His very mercy is used in mockery.—**He is the King of Israel**, etc. Ironical, with a mocking suggestion of still being open to the proof of His Messiahship.—**And we will believe on him**. Unless there was an *atoning* purpose in Christ's death, it will always seem strange that He did not offer some such miraculous proof of His power.

Ver. 43. **He trusted on God**. In their mockery they repeated almost the very language of Ps. 22: 8, and helped to fulfil this Messianic prophecy. (See ver. 46.) Their Pharisaical scrupulousness made them substitute 'God' for 'Jehovah,' which occurs in the Psalm, and which the Jews would not utter from superstitious fear of profanation.

- 44 Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach.
- 45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over

Ver. 44. **The robbers also cast upon him the same reproach.** Luke alone tells of the penitence of one (see Luke 23: 39-43). Both at first reviled Him; but one was converted during the three hours they hung side by side. 'Doubtless the cross aided his penitence. On the soft couch conversion is rare' (Bengel). It is not satisfactory to refer 'the robbers' to but one. At this point occurred the touching incident recorded in John 19: 26, which struck the key-note of the *Stabat Mater*.

Ver. 45. **Now from the sixth hour.** Twelve o'clock, according to Jewish reckoning from sunrise to sunset. The nailing to the cross took place at nine o'clock in the morning. (Mark 15: 25: 'It was the third hour.') John says (19: 14) that it was 'about the sixth hour,' when Pilate presented our Lord to the people for the last time. Pilate would naturally use the Roman or modern mode of reckoning from midnight to noon, and this prevailed in Asia Minor, where John wrote his Gospel. It would take about three hours, from 6 to 9, for the conclusion of the trial and the slow procession to Golgotha. Others assume an early writing error: 6 for 3 (in Greek letters); still others, an indefinite computation of hours. (See Lange on *Matt.*, p. 525, and on *John*, p. 570, and Keil on *Matt.*, p. 585.) Whatever be the explanation of that passage, we accept the accuracy of the verse before us, confirmed by the statements of Mark and Luke. From midday to three o'clock in the afternoon, usually the brightest part of the day, **there was darkness.** Besides the testimony of the three Evangelists, early Christian writers speak of it, and appeal to heathen testimony to support the truth. It could not have been an ordinary eclipse, for the moon was full that day.* Although an earthquake followed (ver. 51), yet even that was no ordinary earthquake, and the obscuration was too entire and too long continued to be the darkness which often precedes an earthquake. 'It was a miraculous occurrence designed to exhibit the amazement of nature and of the God of nature at the wickedness of the crucifixion of Him who is the light of the world and the sun of righteousness' (Schaff, in Lange, p. 525). To deny its supernatural character seems to impair this design. If Jesus of Nazareth is what the Gospels represent Him to be, the needs of humanity ask Him to be, and the faith of the Christian finds Him to be, the supernatural here seems natural. Morison: 'The darkness at

* It may have been caused by some atmospheric influence. On Sept. 6th, 1881, in a great part of New England, the sky was filled all day with smoke, and everything looked as if seen through yellow spectacles, owing to extensive forest fires in Canada and Michigan. I was in Boston on that day, and was told that some people thought the world was coming to an end.

46 all the ¹land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God,

¹ Or, earth.

once reflected the mediatorial eclipse that was going on within, and cast a fitting shade over the guilty population in the immediate vicinity of the scene.'—**Over all the land.** Probably only the whole land of Judæa; the main point being the fact in Jerusalem. But some refer it to the whole world, i. e., where it was day, especially as the heathen notices of what is supposed to be the same event justify an extension beyond Judæa. See the authorities quoted in Lange, p. 325, and notes. Canon Cook (in *Speaker's Comm. on Matt.*, p. 183) agrees with the fathers (Origen, Eusebius, etc.) in referring for confirmation to Phlegon of Tralles, a freedman of Adrian, who states that the greatest eclipse ever known occurred in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, i. e., in the year from midsummer A. D. 32 to A. D. 33, and that a great earthquake at the same time in Asia Minor overthrew the larger part of the city of Nicæa. 'If Phlegon were right in describing that darkness as a true eclipse, his statement would not bear upon this event; but it is certain that there was no natural eclipse in that year (see the tables in Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, p. 238). It is evident, therefore, that Phlegon speaks of a darkness equivalent to an eclipse, connected with a great earthquake, statements coinciding very strikingly with that of the Evangelists.' But the chronology does not agree with the probable year of Christ's death (A. D. 30). Wieseler (*Chronolog. Synopse*, p. 387 sq.) and Meyer deny the bearing of this report upon our case. Still more doubtful is the statement in the so-called 'Acts of Pilate,' where it is said that 'lamps were lighted in the whole world.' So also what Heubner quotes from Suidas, that Dionysius the Areopagite (then a heathen) saw the Eclipse in Egypt, and exclaimed: 'Either God is suffering, and the world sympathizes with Him, or else the world is hurrying to destruction.'

Ver. 46. **And about the ninth hour.** During the three hours of darkness, our Lord was silent. He seems not to have become gradually exhausted, for after nearly six hours on the cross (from 9 A. M. to 3 P. M.), according to three Evangelists, **Jesus cried out with a loud voice** (comp. ver. 50). The agony resembles that in Gethsemane, but seems even more intense. Matthew and Mark mention only this utterance from the cross.—**Eli, Eli.** The first words of Ps. 22, given by Mark in the Aramaic dialect then spoken: 'Eloi, Eloi.'—**Lama**, or 'Lema' (Aramaic and better supported).—**Sabachthani**, also Aramaic. The translation followed: **My God**, etc., suggesting that Matthew wrote in Greek. The twenty-second Psalm, from which this cry is taken, had already been cited (from ver. 8) in mockery by the rulers (ver. 43), whose conduct is described in the Psalm (ver. 7). The casting lots for His garments (ver. 35) is a fulfilment of ver. 18

47 ¹why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man
48 calleth Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put

¹ Or, *why didst thou forsake me?*

(comp. John 19: 24). There are so many other points of agreement, that the Psalm has been deemed a direct and exclusive prophecy of Christ's passion. But it is better to admit a primary reference to David, or to an ideal person representing the righteous. It is then *typical* of the life, sufferings, and victory of Christ, necessarily finding its highest and most striking fulfilment in Him.—**Why hast thou forsaken me?** These words express feeling, and the feeling indicated by their obvious meaning. Bodily causes, inflammation, interruption of the flow of blood, dizziness, no doubt acted on His real human body and soul. But His soul was capable of unusual sufferings. The speedy death, while He could cry with a loud voice (ver. 50), points to a deeper struggle. This was an experience of sin and death in their inner connection and universal significance for the race, by One who was perfectly pure and holy, a mysterious and indescribable anguish of the *body* and the *soul* in immediate prospect of, and in actual wrestling with, death as the wages of sin and the culmination of all misery of man, of which the Saviour was free, but which He voluntarily assumed from infinite love in behalf of the race. In this anguish He expresses His actual feeling of abandonment. But His spirit still holds fast to God as *His* God, and thus our hold on God is established. Here the vicarious nature of the sufferings distinctly appears. (See Lange, on *Matt.* p. 526.)

Ver. 47. **This man calleth Elijah.** The resemblance between the word 'Eli' and the name Elijah is very close in the original. There is here an allusion to the belief that Elijah would come before the Messiah, and hence a sarcastic denial of His Messiahship. A real misapprehension of His language, and a fear that Elijah might come, seems improbable.

Ver. 48. **Straightway one of them.** This was occasioned by our Lord's cry: 'I thirst' (John 19: 28, the solitary word of bodily suffering); but all occurred in quick succession.—**Took a sponge.** It would be impossible to use a cup, as the height of the cross was beyond the reach of the hand.—**Vinegar.** The sour wine (without the 'myrrh') used by the soldiers, and placed there in a vessel for their refreshment. The soldiers had offered Him drink (Luke 23: 36) hours earlier, so that this was probably not one of them.—**A reed.** 'Hys-sop' according to John. This was to reach it to Him. The head of one crucified would be about two feet above that of one standing on the ground.—**Gave him to drink.** He drank (John 19: 30), and this reception of refreshment from one who still mocked is a token that His love vanquishes the world's hate.

49 it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save 50 him.¹ And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and 51 yielded up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the

¹ Many ancient authorities add *And another took a spear, and pierced his side, and there came out water and blood.*

Ver. 49. **And the rest said, Let be** (or, 'wait'), etc. According to Mark, the man himself says this; giving Him the vinegar, in mingled pity and contempt, he probably responded in the same mocking tone to the jest of the others. The latter say: Wait, do not thus sustain Him; for He is expecting Elijah to help Him: the one who offers it responds: This will sustain Him until Elijah comes. It was the last word of cruel mockery.

Ver. 50. **Cried again with a loud voice.** Probably the triumphant cry: 'It is finished!' The order of the Seven Words (as they are called) is: Before the darkness: 1. The prayer of Christ for His enemies, Luke 23: 34. 2. The promise to the penitent robber, Luke 23: 43. 3. The charge to Mary and John, John 19: 26. At the close of the darkness: 4. The cry of distress to His God, Matt. 27: 46; Mark 15: 34. Just before His death: 5. The exclamation: 'I thirst,' John 19: 28. 6. 'It is finished,' John 19: 30. 7. The final commendation of His spirit to God, Luke 23: 46. These utterances from the cross refer to Christ's murderers, to the penitent sinner, to the mother and favorite disciple, to His agony of body and soul, to His work, and to His heavenly Father.—**And yielded up his spirit.** Actually died. None of the Evangelists uses the phrase: 'He died,' but 'He yielded, breathed forth, delivered up His spirit or breath of life.' The interval between the agonized cry: 'My God,' etc., and the actual death in triumph and confidence, was very brief. After the victory came the spirit's rest in the Eternal Father. More than victory is rest in God. It has been urged with much force that the physical cause of our Lord's death was 'a broken heart.' This view accounts for the discharge of water and blood mentioned by John (19: 34). Rupture of the heart is followed by an effusion of blood into the pericardium, where it quickly separates into its solid and liquid constituents, technically termed *crassamentum* and *serum*, but in ordinary language 'blood and water.' At the same time we must remember that Christ voluntarily surrendered His life for His sheep, and took it back again (John 10: 17, 18).

Ver. 51. **The veil of the temple,** etc. The veil before the Holy of Holies, separating it from the Holy Place. It was wrought of gold and purple, very thick and strong. Supernatural agency is more than probable in view of the significance of the occurrence. This took place toward the time of the evening sacrifice. Even if at first known only to the priests, it would still be made known to Christians, since 'a great company of the priests' were afterwards converted (Acts 6: 7).

¹ temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; 52 and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the 53 saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.

¹ Or, *sanctuary*.

It was 'a sign of the removal of the typical atonement through the completion of the real atonement, which insures us a free access to God, Heb. 6: 19; 9: 6; 10: 19' (Lange).—**And the earth did quake.** The earthquake and the events mentioned next are peculiar to Matthew's account. Earthquakes occur frequently at Jerusalem; but here (comp. Isa. 24: 19; Amos 1: 1; Zech. 14: 5; Joel 2: 10; 3: 15, 16; Ez. 32: 7, 8), too, miraculous power is most probable. This was a token of the greatness of the death of Christ; a sign, too, of the influence of His death upon the destiny of the earth itself.—**And the rocks were rent.** The effect of the earthquake, splitting the foundations of the holy city. A sign of wrath, but more than this. Travellers still point to extraordinary rents and fissures in the rocks in the neighborhood.

Vers. 52, 53. **The tombs were opened.** The Jewish tombs, unlike our own, were natural or artificial excavations in rocks, the entrance being closed by a door or a large stone. These, the stone doors of the tombs, were removed, probably by the force of the earthquake, to testify that Christ's death had burst the bands of death.—**That had fallen asleep.** Comp. 1 Cor. 15: 18; 1 Thess. 4: 15.—**Were raised.** The death of Christ is the life of the world. Death died in His death. Matthew alone mentions this fact; but he must have received it from trustworthy witnesses, and the brevity and simplicity of the statement exclude the assumption of a mythical or legendary fiction. The next verse indicates that the actual rising did not take place until 'after His resurrection;' for He is 'the first-born from the dead,' Col. 1: 18. (Enoch and Elijah were translated alive; and the six resurrections mentioned as having taken place before Christ, 1 Kings 17: 2 Kings 4 and 13; Matt. 9; Luke 7; John 11, were simply restorations to the present earthly life.) The remarkable event here recorded was both supernatural and symbolic, proclaiming the truth that the death and resurrection of Christ was a victory over death and Hades, opening the door to everlasting life. Who these 'saints' were is doubtful. Perhaps saints of the olden times, or more probably those personally known to the disciples, as Simeon, Anna, Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, John the Baptist, or open friends of Christ. Whether they died again is also doubtful. But probably not, as verse 53 intimates an appearance for a time; not such a restoration as in the case of Lazarus, and others. Their resurrection was probably

54 Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying,
55 Truly this was ¹the Son of God. And many women were there beholding from afar, which had followed

¹ Or, a son of God.

connected with Christ's preaching in Hades, the spirit-world, as reported by Peter (1 Pet. 3: 19; 4: 6; comp. Acts 2: 31), who may have furnished the information. Not much has been revealed, but enough to proclaim and confirm the blessed truth of which the event is a sign and seal.—Jerusalem is still called 'the holy city,' a title it could retain at least until the day of Pentecost.

Ver. 54. **The centurion**, the Roman officer who superintended the execution and commanded the guard of the four soldiers. He was one of the good centurions; comp. Luke 7: 2; Acts 10: 1; 22: 26; 27: 43.—**And they that were with him**. The soldiers, as is evident from the phrase: **watching Jesus**. Mark and Luke speak of the centurion only, the latter adding the general consternation of other spectators.—**The things that were done**, i. e., how Jesus died, as Mark tells us. The two accounts supplement each other, but show the usual independence.—**Truly this was the (or a) Son of God**. The definitive article is wanting in Greek. The heathen officer used these words probably in the heathen sense: hero and demi-god; but they contained the germ of a Christian confession, and mark his conversion. Comp. the statements of Luke (23: 47): 'Certainly this was a righteous man.' In the apocryphal book of Wisdom of Solomon 2: 18 the terms 'just man' and 'son of God' are used in the same sense: 'If the just man be son of God, He will help him.' But Lange, Alford and others take the words 'Son of God' here in the full sense, as if used with the definitive article, and assume that the centurion was acquainted with the opinions of the Jews who charged Christ with blasphemy for claiming to be 'the Son of God.'—Only the centurion thus spoke, but as the soldiers 'feared,' some decided spiritual effect may have been produced on them also. Luke states that 'the multitudes when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts' (23: 48).

Ver. 55. **Many women**. 'The last at the cross, the first at the grave.' John was also present, probably some of the other disciples.—**Beholding from afar**. At one time a few ventured near the cross (John 19: 25-27), but not 'many.'—**Ministering unto him**, i. e., while they followed Him. Comp. on this ministry, Luke 8: 2. Others, who had followed Him to Jerusalem, are distinguished from these (Mark 15: 41), but it is not necessary to suppose that there were two separate groups of women.

56 Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Ver. 56. **Mary Magdalene.** Mentioned first here, and in Luke 8: 2 among those who ministered to Him. Comp. chap. 28: 2; John 20: 1, 11-18. She was probably a native of Magdala, a village on the Western shore of the Lake of Galilee, a few miles North of Tiberias (now a miserable Moslem hovel, Mejdel). She had been cured by our Lord of an aggravated form of demoniacal possession ('of seven demons,' Luke 8: 3; Mark 16: 9). But this furnishes no sufficient ground for the Catholic tradition (represented in many Italian pictures and embodied in the popular application of the term 'Magdalen'), that she was identical with the unnamed disreputable woman, who washed the Saviour's feet with tears of repentance for her sinful life. The opinions of the fathers are divided or doubtful until the superstitious Pope Gregory I. (A. D. 600) gave his sanction to the hypothesis of the identity of these two not only, but of both with Mary of Bethany, so that this confusion passed even into the Roman Breviary for July 22nd and several mediæval hymns. Hengstenberg has spun out this tradition still further and identified the Lazarus of Bethany with the poor Lazarus of the parable. (See Lange's *John*, p. 340 sq.) There is no show of argument for this strange and unseemly combination except the identity of the name and of the similarity of the anointing scenes recorded by Luke (7: 36) and the other Evangelists (John 12: 3; Matthew and Mark); but the difference of place (Magdala in Galilee, and Bethany in Judæa), as well as of time and circumstances are enough to neutralize the identity of a name so common among the Jews. Luke, 10: 39, gives not the slightest intimation that Mary of Bethany was the sinner mentioned in ch. 7, nor Mary Magdalene whom he honorably introduces in ch. 8, nor does John give any hint of such identity when he mentions Mary Magdalene ch. 19: 25. It seems quite improbable (as urged by Origen and Chrysostom) that our Lord should have selected for special friendship a person whose former life was stained by gross impurity.—**Mary the mother of James and Joses.** Mark: 'Mary the mother of James the less (Gr. 'the little,' either as to stature or age) and Joses.' Comp. on chap. 13: 58. She was the wife of Clopas or Alphæus (John 19: 25), but in our view not the sister-in-law of Mary or of Joseph, who is supposed to have adopted their children.—**The mother of the sons of Zebedee, i. e., 'Salome' (Mark);** comp. chap. 20: 20. As John (19: 25) mentions a group of women near the cross (at an earlier point of time, however), two of whom are mentioned here (Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Clopas), we identify the person spoken of by him as 'His (i. e., Jesus') mother's sister,' with Salome, not with the Mary last named. He would not omit his own mother, but mentioned her in this

CHAPTER 27: 57-66.

The Burial, and the Securing of the Sepulchre.

57 And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was

descriptive way, as he calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' If this interpretation is correct, John was a cousin of Jesus, and this may have been an additional reason why the Lord intrusted His mother to him. The mother of Jesus, so touchingly mentioned by the beloved disciple, had probably been led away by him before the time of which Matthew speaks. When the mother of our Lord withdrew, the others remained 'beholding afar off.' 'These pious women, who, with the courage of heroes, witnessed the dying moments of their Lord and Master, and sat over against the lonely sepulchre (Matt. 26: 61), are the shining examples of female constancy and devotion to Christ which we now can witness every day in all the churches, and which will never cease. Woman's love truly is faithful unto death. Women and children form the majority of the Church militant on earth, and we may infer, also of the Church triumphant in heaven.' (Schaff in Lange's *Matt.* p. 529.)

The Burial, and the Securing of the Sepulchre, vers. 57-66.

CONTENTS. Parallel passages: Mark 15: 42-47; Luke 23: 50-56; John 19: 38-42. The burial as an important fact, is mentioned by all four Evangelists; the sealing and guarding of the sepulchre with the request which led to these precautions (vers. 62-66), are peculiar to Matthew.—Our Lord's intense agony of mind no doubt hastened death, although viewed in another aspect, it may be said, that the Saviour *hastened* His death by a voluntary self-surrender which the Father accepted (comp. Luke 23: 46). The evidence of His death to the soldiers was the incident mentioned John 19: 34. This early death was unusual (comp. Pilate's surprise, Mark 15: 44), but thus the Scripture was fulfilled (John 19: 36, 37). The request of the Jews is also mentioned in John's account. This was the first step towards burial, a legal scruple of His murderers: then follows the request of Joseph of Arimathæa and the events as recorded in the section before us.

Ver. 57. **When evening was come.** The first evening before sundown, at which time the bodies must be removed (Deut. 21: 23). Our Lord's death took place at three in the afternoon.—**There came a rich man.** Probably, to the company of women standing on Golgotha (ver. 56). His going to Pilate is mentioned afterwards. The fact of his being a 'rich man' is mentioned here, an allusion to Is. 53: 9: 'With the rich in His death.' Wealth often gives timely aid to the impecunious church.—**Of Arimathæa.** Either Ramah in Benjamin (Josh. 18: 25; comp. Matt. 2: 18), or Ramah (Ramathaim) in Ephraim, the birth-place of Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 19). Tradition identifies Arimathæa with Ramleh, a town with a famous tower, 40 miles

58 Jesus' disciple: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to 59 be given up. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped 60 it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new

East of Jaffa on the road to Jerusalem, but probably of Saracen origin. Robinson and Thomson (in the new ed. of *The Land and the Book*, 1880, vol. I. 103, 113, 114) locate it at the modern village Renthieh, north of Ludd (the ancient Lydda, where Peter raised Dorcas), between Jaffa and Ramleh.—**Named Joseph.** One Joseph takes care of Jesus in His infancy, another provides for His burial.—**Jesus' disciple.** 'Secretly for fear of the Jews' (John 19: 38). He was a member of the Sanhedrin, of high character, who had not consented to the murder (Luke 23: 50, 51; Mark 15: 43). He seems to have feared that the body might be removed in a disgraceful manner, and his secret faith having been quickened, he took a decisive step. Ecclesiastical tradition makes him one of 'the seventy' and the first who preached the gospel in England, and founded the church of Glastonbury. Another secret disciple of high standing, Nicodemus, now came forward with a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, and took part in this pious act of burying the body of Jesus; see John 19: 39, 40. It required bold courage and self-sacrifice. They put to shame the Apostles.

Ver. 58. **This man went to Pilate.** To the palace. 'He went in boldly' (Mark 15: 43). Although it was the Jewish custom to bury the bodies of the crucified before sunset, Pilate's consent was necessary. On Pilate's surprise, see Mark 15: 44.—**Then Pilate commanded.** The ready consent may have been owing to the station and character of Joseph.

Ver. 59. **And Joseph took the body.** He took it down, lowering it from the cross (Mark, Luke, and John). The descent from the cross is the masterpiece of Rubens in the cathedral at Antwerp.—**Wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.** A winding sheet. This would enclose the spices used in the temporary embalming, which now took place, Nicodemus having brought the spices (John 19: 39, 40). There was not time enough to embalm on Friday evening, so the costly gifts of Nicodemus were used to preserve the body, the women preparing in the interval what they thought necessary for the further anointing.

Ver. 60. **In his own new tomb.** Peculiar to Matthew, but implied in the other accounts. The fact that it was 'new' (comp. Luke 23: 53; John 19: 41), seems designed to overcome any suspicion as to the identity of Him who rose. The location was in a 'garden' (John 19: 41), near the spot of the crucifixion and hence well adapted for the hurried burial.—**In the rock,** an artificial excavation, probably prepared at great cost. It seems to have been cut horizontally and not downward.—**He rolled a great stone.** The common method of closing sepulchres.—**To the door.** There was but one entrance.

tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Now on the morrow, which is *the day* after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and

Ver. 61. **Was there, at the tomb.—The other Mary.** ‘The mother of Jesus’ (Mark 15: 47), already mentioned in ver. 56. According to Luke the female disciples from Galilee all beheld the sepulchre, and returned to prepare spices and ointments, resting on the Sabbath, which began that evening. These two not only saw where He was laid (Mark) but lingered there, **sitting over against the sepulchre**, as the evening came on.

Ver. 62. **The morrow, which is the day after the preparation.** The day of the preparation was Friday, as is plain from Mark 15: 45. ‘The morrow’ was therefore the Jewish Sabbath, though it is not called so here. The first day of the Passover (Friday) was in one sense a Sabbath, hence this designation is more definite. It is also supposed that the word ‘preparation’ was the solemn designation in use among the Christians to distinguish the Friday of the crucifixion. (Meyer).—**Gathered together.** On Saturday morning; the great Sabbath of the year, as the verse plainly states. While our Lord rested in the tomb, they desecrated the Sabbath, despite their great scrupulousness. It is urged that this must have taken place on Friday evening after six o’clock, since the rulers would guard against the stealing away on the first night as well as on the subsequent one. But their anxiety was about the night preceding the third day (ver. 64). Besides the women were evidently not aware of the presence of the guard (Mark 16: 3). This is accounted for, if we suppose that this incident occurred on Saturday, and not on Friday evening after six o’clock.

Ver. 63. **We remember, etc.** Comp. chap. 12: 40; John 2: 19. Even if the meaning of the saying was hid from the disciples, enmity was quick to apprehend it.—**That deceiver.** The language of triumph, despite their request. Friends and foes were both busied about the dead Christ.

Ver. 64. **Until the third day, from His death, the third after and including Friday.—The best authorities omit ‘by night.’—Worse**

65 the last error will be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, ¹Ye have a guard: go your way, ²make it 66 as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

CHAPTER 28: 1–10.

The Resurrection.

28: 1 Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magda-

¹ Or, *Take a guard.*

² Gr. *make it sure, as ye know.*

than the first. The claim to be the Messiah, etc., was in their view the first deceit. As regards the effects of a belief in the resurrection, they judged rightly.

Ver. 65. **Ye have a guard**, or, 'have a guard,' i. e., I permit you to take one. The Roman soldiers, who certainly composed the guard (chap. 28: 14), were not under their command.—**Make it as sure as ye know how.** He gives them the guard, and they are to use the means as they think best. Pilate shirks the responsibility, but again gives way, yet this was overruled for good.

Ver. 66. **Sealing the stone.** A string was stretched across the stone, and sealed to the rock at either end, with wax or sealing-clay. After these precautions the body could not disappear, except through the miracle of the resurrection.

CHAPTER 28.

The Resurrection.

GENERAL REMARKS. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the great miracle which puts the divine seal of approbation to the whole work of Christ. It is the immovable foundation of the Christian church and the pledge of the future resurrection of believers. 'I live, ye shall live also.' Nothing but such a miracle can account for the sudden elevation of the disciples from the midnight gloom of despondency into which the crucifixion had cast them, to the midday height of joy and triumph with which they boldly declared the resurrection at the risk of their lives. Only this miracle can explain the conversion of Paul, and the establishment of the Christian church. Without it, the church would be a stream without a fountain, a temple without a base, an effect without a cause; without it, the gospel would be an idle dream, and Christ Himself a cruel deceiver. 1 Cor. 15: 17. But the fact is the most certain in history. It is distinctly asserted by four Evangelists whose testimony nowhere shows greater independence of each other, and in the Acts of the Apostles; it is preached directly or assumed in all the Epistles; it has been so believed for eighteen centuries, and is commemorated on every Lord's Day.

All theories which seek to set the resurrection aside have proven failures. To suppose that the Apostles told a lie, as did the Sanhedrin (chap. 28: 13), is a *moral* impossibility; that the resurrection was a mere reviving from a swoon, is a *physical* impossibility; that the appearances were mere visions or ecstasies, is a *psychological* impossibility, such visions are not so often repeated nor to so many persons in different localities. Phantoms, visions, the result of too lively imaginations (!) do not revolutionize the world. Paul was no visionary. To found a church without a resurrection would require a greater miracle than the conversion of Paul or even the resurrection itself. Consistency requires that those who deny the reality of the resurrection, should deny the Apostolic history also; and what is then left to account for Christianity, the greatest fact in history? Christianity lives because Christ lives the same, yesterday, to-day and forever.

In the various narratives of this most wonderful and mysterious period of forty days, dealing with facts that transcend all ordinary Christian experience, we might expect, if anywhere, differences of statement. The difficulty in harmonizing the narratives satisfactorily in every particular arises naturally from our want of knowledge of all the details in the precise order of their occurrence. Indeed, minor differences with substantial agreement, confirm the main facts, far more than a literal agreement would. The Gospel witnesses suggest no suspicion of a previous understanding and mutual dependence. 'The confusion which confessedly exists in this part of the gospel narrative, and the consequent difficulty of reducing it to one continuous account, is not the fault of the historians, but the natural effect of the events themselves, as impressed upon the senses and the memory of different witnesses. If it had pleased God to inspire a single writer as the historian of the resurrection, he would no doubt have furnished as coherent and perspicuous a narrative as any other in the sacred volume. But since it entered into the divine plan, as a necessary element, to set before us not a single but a fourfold picture of our Saviour's life and death, we must purchase the advantage of this varied exhibition, by submitting to its incidental inconveniences, among which is the difficulty, just referred to, of combining all these views, taken from different points of observation, in one complete view to be seen at the same moment' (J. A. Alexander on *Mark* 16: 1). 'The record is fragmentary, but it is also divinely typical. That which is incomplete as a history is complete as a gospel' (Westcott, *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, 1881, p. 6). The different appearances of Christ changed, and yet the same, belonging to another world, and yet still on earth as He wills and when He wills, 'meet and satisfy the aspirations of man towards a knowledge of the unseen world' (*ib.* p. 7).

ORDER OF APPEARANCES. We suggest the following as the most probable view; certainty is perhaps impossible.

(1.) To Mary Magdalene (*John* 20: 14; *Mark* 16: 9).

(2.) To the other women (*Matt.* 28: 9). The main difficulty in harmonizing the accounts is just here. Some transpose (1) and (2). *Mark* 16: 9 (that passage is authentic, if not genuine, see notes there) is explicit, while John's account implies the same. The details of (1) and (2) may be thus arranged: (a.) Three women start for the sepulchre, early on Sunday morning (*Mark* 16: 1; comp. *Matt.* 28: 1), followed by others bearing spices (*Luke* 24: 1). (b.) These three finding the stone rolled away are differently affected; Mary Magdalene starting back to meet the male disciples who are also coming (*John* 20: 2); the other two remaining, approach nearer and see one angel sitting upon the stone (*Matt.* 28: 2-7). They go back to meet the other women coming

with the spices. (c.) While all are absent Peter and John come and find the tomb empty (John 20: 3-10). (d.) Mary Magdalene returns, sees two angels in the grave (John 20: 12), and turning round sees Jesus (*first appearance*), and takes the tidings to the disciples (John 20: 14-18). (e.) The two other, surprised by the message of the angel, meet the women bringing spices; all visit the tomb and see the two angels standing (Luke 14: 4-7), one of whom was sitting on the right side as they entered (Mark 15: 5). (f.) As they go back they meet the Lord (Matt. 28: 9). The apparent confusion in the narratives is but an apt reflection of the tumult of doubt, fear, and joy which possessed the whole company during that day, as the different stories were repeated.

(3.) To Peter (Luke 24: 34; 1 Cor. 15: 5).

(4.) To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, toward evening on Sunday (Mark 16: 12, 13; Luke 24: 13-32).

(5.) To the Apostles (*except Thomas*), on Sunday evening (Mark 16: 14; Luke 24: 36; John 20: 19, 24).

These five occurred on the day of resurrection, the first Christian Sabbath.

(6.) To the Apostles, including Thomas; a week after (John 20: 24-29), in Jerusalem, where they had waited throughout the Passover. That ended on Friday, on Saturday, (the Jewish Sabbath) they would not start for Galilee; perhaps they waited over Sunday because they already regarded it as holy.

(7.) In Galilee, at the Lake of Genesaret, to seven disciples (John 21: 1-14), the *third time* to the assembled Apostles (John 21: 14).

(8.) To the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28: 16-20; comp. Mark 16: 15-18).

(9.) To the five hundred brethren (1 Cor. 5: 6). Probably identical with (8).

(10.) To James (1 Cor. 15: 7). It is doubtful which James this was, but probably James, the brother of the Lord, who now became a believer.

(11.) The final appearance to the eleven, closing with the Ascension from the Mount of Olives (Luke 24: 50, 51; Acts 1: 9, 10). Probably referred to in the last clause of 1 Cor. 15: 7.

(12.) To Paul on the way to Damascus (1 Cor. 15: 8). This occurred several years after the Resurrection, but is counted by Paul as the last appearance of the risen Lord. The visions of Stephen and John are of a different order.

Why did Christ show Himself only to His friends and not to His enemies? John 14: 19 fairly implies that our Lord would not thus do. Comp. Acts 10: 41. His holiness forbade such an honor to those who had wickedly crucified Him; His wisdom forbade His constraining them to a belief, not of the heart, which would only rouse anew false expectations. Without the Spirit's influence it would only have hardened them. As regards His disciples, such appearances would have interfered with the progress of their strengthening conviction of His resurrection, by depriving them of the assuring intercourse and quiet contemplations of the forty days. As regards the proof of the fact: those who will not accept the testimony which comes from the disciples whose unbelief gradually gave way to settled faith, would not be influenced by any evidence that might have come from the Sanhedrin. The resurrection was a revelation of a new mode of human existence immortal and incorruptible which could not be understood without a new power of spiritual discernment. The world cannot see Christ. Faith and sympathy are the indispensable conditions of apprehending the presence of the risen Lord.

2 lene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled

Matthew mentions only the appearance to the women on the day of the resurrection, and to the eleven on the mountain in Galilee, inserting the bribery of the guards as the sequel of chap. 27: 62-66. Ver. 18 is also peculiar to this Gospel. The command to go into Galilee is found in Mark's account, and John tells in great detail what occurred there, so that both the command and its fulfilment are well established. Luke 24: 49 is not in conflict with this; judging from the context there that command was given after the return from Galilee. The disciples would naturally linger at Jerusalem; hence the first command was needed, to bring them to the most fitting place for the appearance to the whole Church (in Galilee where it was safer, and where the new Church would be most separated from the Old Economy).

THE RESURRECTION, vers. 1-10. Comp. Mark 16: 1-8; Luke 24: 1-12; John 20: 1-18.

Ver. 1. Now late on the sabbath day, i. e., the Jewish Sabbath. The next clause shows the time of the day; so that it was really after the Sabbath had ended, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning the days. Mark (16: 1): 'when the sabbath was past,' and 'very early on the first day of the week' (on Sunday morning). E. Deutsch says: 'A Hebrew letter written in the night between Saturday to Sunday would, even in our time, be dated *conclusion of Sabbath* or *eve of the first day*' (art. 'Day' in Kitto's *Cyclop.*).—**As it began to dawn toward.** Literally, 'at the dawning into.' Mark says: 'when the sun was risen;' Luke: 'at early dawn;' John: 'while it was yet dark.' The twilight in Palestine is not of very long continuance as compared with most European countries, so that all point to about the same time, namely, day-break.—**Mary Magdalene.** John mentions her alone.—**And the other Mary.** The mother of James the Little. See ch. 27: 61, which suggests why Matthew mentions these two, omitting 'Salome,' whom Mark (16: 1) names.—**To see the sepulchre.** The purpose of anointing or embalming the body is omitted by Matthew (see accounts of Mark and Luke). These two women did not bear the spices. Another motive was present, an unconscious hope of the resurrection, which hurried these women, who had watched by the sepulchre, in advance of the others mentioned by Luke. Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward (Luke 8: 3), may have been in the advance party, or with the larger band coming with the spices which had been prepared by all the female Galilean disciples (comp. Luke 23: 55-24: 1-10).

Ver. 2. A great earthquake. Only mentioned by Matthew; a repetition of the shock described ch. 27: 51. Probably witnessed by the women. They first questioned how the stone should be rolled away, so that they could embalm the body (Mark 16: 8). The earthquake is connected with the sudden rolling away of the great stone by

3 away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was
 4 as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for
 fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as
 dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the
 5 women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus,
 6 which hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is
 risen, even as he said. Come, see the place ¹where
 7 the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples,
 He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before

¹ Many ancient authorities read *where he lay*.

the angel.—**For an angel of the Lord.** The resurrection itself was not a matter of actual bodily vision, and seems to have taken place before the stone was rolled away (ver. 6). The tomb was opened for the sake of the women and the disciples, not to allow the Lord to pass out. The stone could not have been a hindrance to Him (comp. John 20: 19, 26).—**And sat upon it.** This is to be distinguished from all the other angelic appearances. Mary Magdalene probably started back about this time, and left the other Mary and Salome to see and hear the angel.

Ver. 3. **His appearance**, rather than his form.—**As lightning.** In its exceeding brightness. Comp. the other descriptions of the angels within the sepulchre (Mark 15: 5; Luke 24: 4; John 20: 12). These angelic appearances cannot be regarded as visions. The accounts are too explicit.

Ver. 4. **For fear of him**, i. e., of the angel. As the angel was there when the women came, and the guard did not go back to the city until after the women departed (ver. 11), it seems most probable that all these occurrences took place *just as* the women came.—**The watchers did quake.** In their terror they did not prevent the women from going into the sepulchre.

Ver. 5. **Fear not ye.** Let the soldiers fear, but not ye. This indicates that all were still outside the tomb.—**For I know.** He came to help them in this hour of perplexity, not to frighten them.—**Who hath been crucified.** The form used is common in the New Testament, pointing to what *has* happened, but with continued results.

Ver. 6. **He is not here, for he is risen.** Hilary: 'Through woman death was first introduced into the world; to woman the first announcement was made of the resurrection.'—**Even as he said.** Comp. the expansion of this thought in Luke 24: 6, 7, to all the women afterwards, *in* the sepulchre.—**Come, see the place.** This implies that the women did enter the tomb; see ver. 8.—**The Lord.** So an angel speaks of 'Jesus who hath been crucified.'

Ver. 7. **Tell his disciples.** This is a message to the disciples, as a body. Women bore the first glad tidings from beyond the grave.

you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have
 8 told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb
 with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples
 9 word. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.
 And they came and took hold of his feet, and wor-
 10 shipped him. Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not:
 go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and
 there shall they see me.

—**He goeth before you into Galilee:** as had been foretold in ch. 26: 32; comp. John 10: 4. The gathering of the flock in Galilee was a measure of prudence, to prevent persecution, and to dissociate them from the old temple.—**There shall ye see him.** Still part of the message, and yet indirectly applicable to the hearers also.—**Lo, I have told you.** These words, adding solemnity to the important announcement, are peculiar to Matthew, and a mark of accuracy.

Ver. 8. **And they departed quickly from the tomb.** As we suppose, the visits of Peter and John, and of Mary Magdalene, occurred next; then these two women met the others, and returning with them, all entered the tomb, where the message was repeated (Luke 24: 3-8). The word 'quickly' is not against this, for the events must have taken place in rapid succession.—**With fear and great joy.** A natural state of mingled feeling, in view of what they had seen and heard. *Fear* at what they had seen, *joy* at what they had heard, and both mingled because the latter seemed too good to be true. The same state of mind is indicated in all the accounts.

Ver. 9. The first clause: 'And as they went to tell His disciples' (E. V.), is omitted in the oldest MSS.; but the sense is not affected.—**Behold, Jesus met them.**—This (the *second*) appearance is mentioned by Matthew only. Luke 24: 24: 'but Him they saw not,' is a report of what the two disciples had heard before they left Jerusalem.—**All hail.** A joyous salutation.—**Took hold of his feet.** In mingled fear and joy. The action was very natural in such circumstances, and was allowed to strengthen the evidence of His resurrection (comp. on the other hand, John 20: 17). In Mary's case this was not necessary.—**And worshipped him.** Religious worship or adoration is here meant, not mere reverence, though the word often has the latter sense. 'The intercourse and companionship of the Lord, after His resurrection, with His disciples, during the forty days of joy, bore manifestly a different character from what they did before His death. Through His death and resurrection, the glorification of His body had begun.' (Lisco.)

Ver. 10. **Fear not.** This injunction was called for by the mingled emotions of those addressed. The language has also the vivacious form of joyous feeling. 'There is a mysterious awfulness about His Person which first inspires fear, and then claims adoration' (Westcott).

CHAPTER 28: 11-15.

The Falseness in Jerusalem.

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told unto the chief

—**Go tell my brethren.** A touching term coming from the Risen One, and applied to those who had forsaken Him. It indicates His continued affection and their fellowship with Him in His glory.—**That they depart into Galilee.** In the excited, half doubting, half-rejoicing mood which characterized all the believers, male and female, there was a necessity for a repetition of this command (see ver. 7). Frequent appearances, repeated commands were called for; the first to convince them, the second to direct them. Our own experience shows the same need. Hence we are prepared to expect that there were other appearances than those recorded here. Matthew passes over most of them, mentioning, probably, only those which impressed his own mind most, or seemed best adapted for his purpose.—**And there shall they see me.** This seems to refer, as in ver. 7, to the whole body of the disciples, who under the leadership of the eleven returned to Galilee about nine days afterwards, many of whom came to Jerusalem again before the Ascension (Acts 1: 13-15). Matthew is silent about the subsequent appearances to the Apostles in Jerusalem (Mark 16: 14; Luke 24: 36; John 20: 19, 26), though present on these occasions. As he wrote for Jewish Christians, he may have wished to emphasize the appearance in Galilee, in order to lead their minds away from Jerusalem, to which their education would still make them cling.

The Falseness in Jerusalem, vers. 11-15.

CONTENTS. The two incidents of this section seem to have been placed together, to mark a contrast. They are peculiar to Matthew, like that of the appointment of the guard. Judaism reached its lowest point, when it must bribe heathen soldiers to lie for it. Matthew would thus lead the minds of the Jewish Christians, for whom he wrote, away from the desecrated mount in Jerusalem, to the mount in Galilee, where our Lord proclaims His glory and power. The Gospel closes with a command and a promise (ver. 20) to those who should go forth as despised Nazarenes (Galileans), the fulfilment of which not only proves the falsity of the rulers' story, but left Judaism forever impotent. It is a fitting close for all time. For on the fulfilment of the promise, always connected with obedience to the command, rests the proof of the whole simple narrative.

Ver. 11. **While they were going.** The fact that the soldiers did not go first, indicates that all the occurrences at the sepulchre occupied but a short time.—**Some of the guard, etc.** They told the truth, to escape the penalty for seeming negligence, possibly hoping for a bribe.—**Chief priests,** under whose direction they had been, and to whom they ought to report.

12 priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole 14 him away while we slept. And if this¹ come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of 15 care. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, *and continueth* until this day.

¹ Or, come to a hearing before the governor.

Ver. 12. **Taken counsel.** This was a meeting of the Sanhedrin. Whether public or secret, regular or specially called to meet this emergency, is unknown.—**They, i. e.,** the chief priests and elders. They resorted to bribery and falsehood.—**Gave large money.** More than they gave to Judas. This is the lowest depth of their malice; and a humiliating position.

Ver. 13. **Stole him away while we slept.** The story carries its refutation on its face. If all the soldiers were asleep, they could not discover the thieves, nor would they proclaim their negligence, the punishment for which was death; if even a few of them were awake, they might and would have prevented the theft. A few timid disciples would not have made such an attempt. But men in the infatuation of unbelief, will believe any story however improbable.

Ver. 14. **And if this (i. e., the reported sleeping on guard) come to the governor's ears.** There is no evidence that Pilate took any notice of the matter, but the soldiers ran a risk, against which they are now insured.—**We will persuade him.** A hint at further and costly bribery; for Pilate was avaricious and corrupt. But he may never have heard the story.—**Rid you of care.** Save you from anxiety and danger. They were ready to promise this, though to gain their end they would not scruple to sacrifice their tools.

Ver. 15. **This saying.** This report of the soldiers that the disciples stole the body; not the entire account here given.—**Was spread abroad.** This points to the time when the falsehood gained currency.—**Among the Jews.** Here used for the first time in a hostile sense, but often in the Gospel of John.—**Until this day, i. e.,** when the Gospel was written, twenty or thirty years after the resurrection. In view of this currency of the story, it follows that *either the Sanhedrin, or the early Christians invented a lie.* There is no middle ground. The testimony we possess, the proper inquiry after motives on either side, as well as the history of both for eighteen centuries, show conclusively that it was *not* the early Christians who invented the falsehood. One fact is conclusively proved: the body of Christ could not be found either in the tomb, nor among the disciples, nor anywhere else. The

CHAPTER 28: 16-20.

The Risen Lord in Galilee. The Great Commission.

16 But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the

Sanhedrin no doubt made every effort to discover it in order to expose the falsehood of the resurrection; but they failed. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century (*Dial. c. Tryph. Jud. c. 108*), mentions the report as common among the Jews of his time, that the Jews sent chosen men to all the world saying: 'A godless and lawless heresy has been raised by a Galilean impostor, and when we had crucified him, his disciples stole him by night from the tomb.' He thus from his own experience attests the truth of the narrative of Matthew. The lie was repeated by the blasphemous Jewish legend 'Toledoth Jesu,' and was believed by credulous infidels in modern times.

The Risen Lord in Galilee. The Great Commission, vers. 16-20.

This record of the appearance of the Lord in royal majesty to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee, and probably to the five hundred brethren mentioned by Paul (1 Cor. 15: 6), and the great commission with the pledge of His unbroken presence to the end of the world, forms a most appropriate conclusion of the Gospel of Matthew which is a Gospel of Christ, the King. It begins with the royal descent of Christ and the adoration of the wise men who represent the heathen world, and it ends with the adoration of the disciples and the command to make all nations subject to His Kingdom. 'With this sublime utterance St. Matthew winds up his Gospel, throughout which he has kept the principles, which are thus annunciated, distinctly before our minds; the universal sovereignty of Christ; His purpose of bringing all nations into His Kingdom; the conditions of admission and continuance of His Church; the complete record of His teaching, doctrinal, moral, and spiritual; and the assurance of perpetuity and progress under His abiding presence.' (*Speaker's Com.*)

Ver. 16. But the eleven disciples. As this meeting was appointed before our Lord's death (chap. 26: 32), as the message of the angel (ver. 7), repeated by our Lord Himself (ver. 10) was probably addressed to the whole body of disciples, and as the language of ver. 17 ('some doubted') could scarcely apply to the eleven, we infer that all the disciples who could be brought together were assembled on this occasion, identifying it with the appearance mentioned in 1 Cor. 15: 6 ('five hundred brethren at once'). It was probably the *eight*th appearance, preceded by that at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). 'The eleven disciples' are mentioned as representatives of the entire band.—**Went into Galilee.** Probably on the Monday after the Passover feast had closed, nine days after the resurrection.—**Unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them.** Evidently a definite place of meeting, but exactly when and where is unknown. Perhaps the mount of Beatitudes (also called 'the mountain,' *τὸ ὄρος*, ch. 5: 1), from which He had in His early ministry proclaimed the laws of His Kingdom.

17 mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped *him*: but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy

Ver. 17. **They worshipped him.** Fell prostrate at His feet. Religious worship, as in many cases; the matter could scarcely be mentioned, if it meant less here.—**But some doubted.** A few, probably of the five hundred, not of the ‘eleven.’ Some say the doubt was respecting the identity of our Lord, and find in it an evidence of their caution in examining the evidence, which gives their subsequent conviction and testimony the greater weight. But they came here because they thought He was risen, and the sight of the Lord had in all other cases produced conviction. The doubt was probably whether it was proper to worship Him, especially as the following words of our Lord apply so directly to such a doubt. So now ‘some,’ attached to our Lord, have a speculative doubt as to the propriety of according Him Divine honors. When it becomes a positive denial of the power He claims in the next verse, genuine faith in Him is scarcely possible.

Ver. 18. **And Jesus came to them.** He may have been seen first at a distance, or He may now have approached those who doubted.—**All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.** An expression of His glorification and victory, in startling contrast with the preceding crucifixion amidst the mockery of His foes and the despair of His friends. The primary reference is to His authority as Mediator, extending over all in heaven and on earth, for His Church. It was given by the Father to Him as the God-man, though as the Eternal Word, He had such glory before the foundation of the world. Before the resurrection the disciples were not ready for this revelation, nor had the victory of the God-man been won. Our Lord now announces the fact, but this victory was won at the Resurrection as the crown of His obedience unto death. Comp. Phil. 2: 9-11. He lingers on earth to assure His chosen ones, and at the ascension enters into His Inheritance.

Ver. 19. **Go ye therefore.** ‘The grandeur of the charge and the apparent inadequacy of the instruments are alike surprising.’ The glorification of Christ is the ground of His sending them and the blessed reason why in their weakness and insufficiency they can go. Evidently addressed to all the brethren, not to the Apostles only, and so understood in the early Church (comp. Acts 8: 1, 4).—**Make disciples of.** More than ‘teach.’ It includes the two means of Christianizing which follow: ‘baptizing’ and ‘teaching’ (ver. 20). Because Christ rules (ver. 18), go, not to conquer men by force, but to

20 Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever

work on their hearts—make them disciples, docile pupils in the school of Christ.—**All the nations.** The limitation of chap. 10: 5 is now removed. Then the disciples needed time to learn; now their commission is made universal. The Risen Lord claims not one nation, but all. His Kingdom is as wide as humanity and as enduring as eternity.—**Baptizing them.** The ‘discipling’ consists of two parts: *baptism*, the rite of admission, and *instruction*. This is the ordinary process in the Christian Church.—**Into (not ‘in’) the name.** This includes the idea of ‘by the authority of,’ but also ‘dedicated into communion and fellowship with’ the triune God. Baptism is the sign and seal of the new covenant of grace with all its blessings and privileges, as also its duties and responsibilities. The neglect of the latter destroys the claim to the former. It is the initiation into the service and communion of *one* name (not ‘names’), i. e. the one revealed being of the **Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.** It is the one name of One God, existing and manifested as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Comp. the baptism of Jesus, where all three persons of the Godhead revealed themselves.—This passage and the Apostolic benediction 2 Cor. 13: 15 are the most direct proof texts of the Holy Trinity. It would be impossible thus to co-ordinate the Son and the Spirit with the eternal Father (especially from the standpoint of Jewish monotheism), if they were not truly divine. But the doctrine of the Trinity rests even more on facts, on the whole Scripture revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the three great works of creation, redemption, and sanctification. All of which are signified and sealed in this formula of baptism. Since God reveals Himself as He is: this Trinity of revelation (oeconomical Trinity) involves the Trinity of essence (ontological Trinity). To this corresponds our threefold relation and obligation to God, as created by the Father, as redeemed by the Son, as sanctified by the Spirit. The baptismal formula is the expansion of Peter’s confession, the nucleus of the Apostles’ Creed, and the sum of all our creeds.

Ver. 20. **Teaching them.** This teaching is a continued process, which partly precedes and partly follows baptism. As the eleven Apostles and their companions could not do all this, we find here the institution of a continuous baptizing and teaching. That this involved an office, arises not only from the necessity of the case, but from the fact that the Apostles are addressed primarily, though not exclusively.—**All things whatsoever I commanded you.** The doctrines and precepts of Christ, nothing less and nothing more, are the proper subjects of Christian faith and practice. In these, however, are included the Old Testament which He repeatedly confirms and the further revelations He made to those personally ‘commanded’ by Him, including the Apostle Paul.—**And lo.** To encourage them.—**I am with you.** A proof of Christ’s Divinity. By His Providence, His Spirit, His life;

I commanded you : and lo, I am with you ¹alway, even unto ²the end of the world.

¹ Gr. *all the days*.

² Or, *the consummation of the age*.

for the idea of vital union with Him had already been declared (John 41: 20; 15: 5; 16: 22). 'Absent in body, yet wholly and most truly present in power.' (Beza and Meyer.) Present as God to help, present as Man to sympathize; present in My whole person, present spiritually, yet most really and truly. The simple language of the passage, as well as the facts of Christian history, forbid our limiting this promise to one set of men, claiming to be successors of the Apostles. There is, of course, involved a special promise to those engaged in the fulfilling of the previous command. The Apostles, the organizers of the Church, arranged about the appointment of those who should perform this service. But in their *peculiar* office they could have no successors, and in the organization of the Church they were governed not so much by formal rules as by the exigencies of the case. The promise of Christ's abiding presence is to His people as individuals constituting a whole, those in responsible stations receiving special grace only as they have special needs which they present on the plea of this promise.—**Alway**. Literally: 'all the days.' Never absent a single day, however dark, until the last when He shall come again.—**Unto the end of the world**. This does not set a term to Christ's presence, but to His invisible and temporal presence, which will be exchanged for His visible and eternal presence at His coming. Now Christ is *with us*; then, when He shall appear in glory, we shall be *with Him* where He is (1 John 3: 2). The fact of the Ascension is clearly implied here, as well as in other passages of this Gospel, as chap. 22: 44; 24: 30; 25: 14, 31; 26: 64. The word 'Amen' was added afterwards. The Gospel does not end abruptly, but appropriately; simply and yet majestically. Evidently this interview is recorded by the Evangelist, as implying the institution of the Christian Church, distinct from Judaism,—an important point for readers of Jewish origin. If men now seek for the Apostolic Church, let them remember Christ's words as recorded by an Apostle: and they will find it *where Christ is*. *Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia*.)

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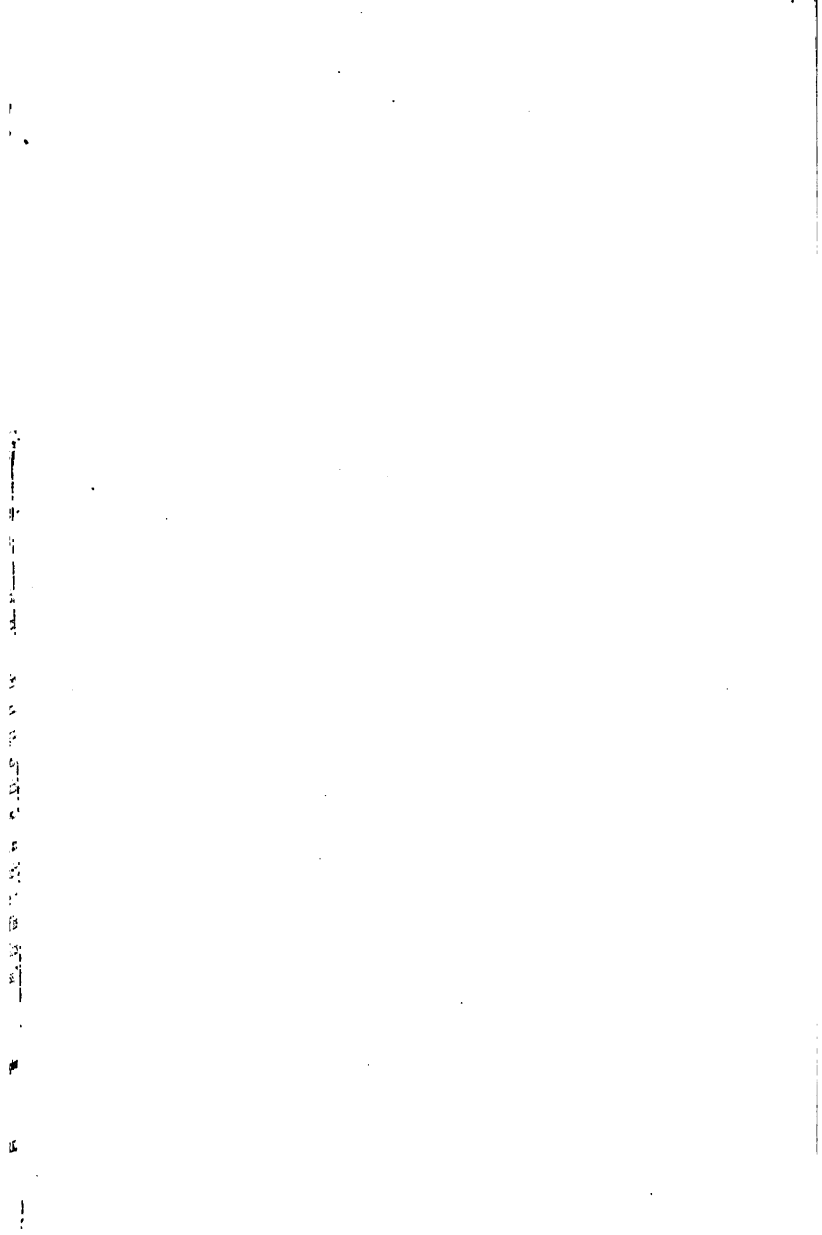
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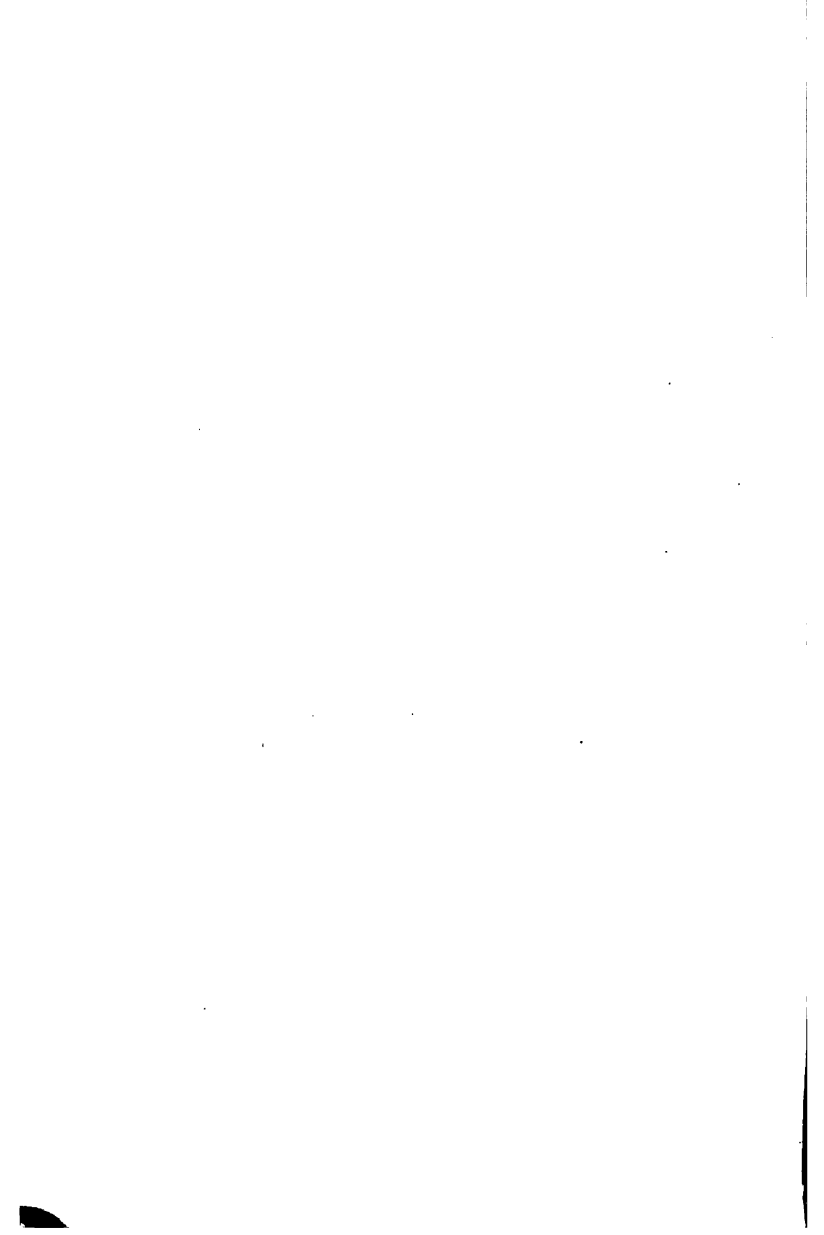
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